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SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

ISSUE 774



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7 news NURSERY ROOM POLITICS

The Liberals and NDP roll out a buggyful of new
(and not-so-new) child-care platforms.

9 letters REVIEWING PLAY'S OPENING NIGHT

Readers respond to Edmonton's new LGBTQ club.

11 city life THEY'VE TAKEN ALL THE FUN OUT OF HABANO

Christopher Hansen says casual cigar enthusiasts
have become collateral damage in the anti-smok-
ing war.

20 music THE ALICE COOPER RORSCHACH TEST

His 34th studio album is a concept piece about a
homicidal maniac who thinks he's a spider... or
is it?

43 on screen I CAN'T BELIEVE I ASPHYXATE THE WHOLE THING

The movie version of Chuck Palahniuk's *Choke*
has so many laboured quirks it can hardly
breathe.

49 arts THIS IS THE TOEWS I KNOW, I KNOW

Miriam Toews soars back into bookstores with the
seriocomic road novel *The Flying Troutmans*.

54 savage love MILK YOUR BOYFRIEND THRICE WEEKLY!

There's a happy medium to be found between this
high-libido guy and his low-libido girl.

58 the back ASSORTED GOODIES

Comics, crosswords, and more.

sections news pg 7 | city life pg 11 | music pg 20 | on screen pg 43 | arts pg 49
joey vogels pg 53 | dan savage pg 54 | the back pg 58 | first person pg 59



EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
Producer Kerrie Long continues
her reign as the city's screen
queen. PHOTO BY IAN JACKSON

23



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COMMENTS ON FILMS

PAUL MATWYCHUK ON THE FILM VERSION OF *CHOCKE* | PAGE 43

“THE PLOT FEELS LIKE A COLLECTION OF LEFTOVER IDEAS AND IMAGES
THAT PALAHNIUK COULDN'T SQUEEZE INTO *FIGHT CLUB* OR *INVISIBLE MONSTERS*.”



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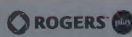
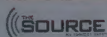
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sunday

monday

tuesday

wednesday

thursday

friday

saturday



Sheryl Crow, Rexall Place, Oct. 2

SEPTEMBER 25

music | **HEY OCEAN**

They're young, fun, and get incredible kicks from the Toyota Yaris. Kicks that most of us will never understand. That's probably because they've sold their music to Toyota for more money than most of us will earn in our lives. Urban Lounge, 9 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 26

arts | **3RD ANNUAL KALEIDOS! FAMILY ARTS FESTIVAL** A "no-tie gala" will kick off this arts extravaganza full of theatre, dance, and concerts for the entire family. If you break dress code and wear a tie, we aren't responsible for what happens to you. Carrot Community Arts Coffee House.

SEPTEMBER 27

learning | **JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY** Jane Austen can be tough to understand, and people fear what they don't understand. But Bridget Toms is here to help. Visit the Stanley A. Milner Library at 2 p.m., and she'll help you "unite some of the best blessings of existence."

SEPTEMBER 28

discussion | **ELECTION DISCUSSIONS** The commies are coming! Oh, wait; they're already here. And since the Cold War is over, why not sit down with them and argue politics? Steeps Tea Lounge (11116 Whyte Ave.), 7-9 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 29

learning | **100 MILE DIET** Ivor Mackay speaks about local food and asks that anyone who knows anything about primitive skills including spinning wool, making cordage, baskets, bows, and arrows, or how to tan animal hides to show up. The Village, 7 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 30

learning | **GARBAGE WARRIOR** Part of the Thoughtful Tuesday Documentary series. Follow eco architect Michael Reynolds as he builds off-the-grid compounds for radicals looking to tune in and drop out. Steeps Tea Lounge (11116 Whyte Ave.), 7 p.m.

OCTOBER 1

music | **MUSIC WEDNESDAYS AT NOON** 30TH SEASON Calendar hasn't been around for 30 years, but eating a bag lunch while listening to classical music sounds like a noble tradition to keep up. Did we mention it's free? McDougall United Church, 12:10 p.m.

OCTOBER 2

music | **SHERYL CROW** Sheryl Crow is a MILF: a Musically Inclined Lyrical Female, that is. What did you think we meant? Rexall Place, 7:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 3

music | **RON SEXSMITH** The master of "shadow gospel" brings his brand of spirituality to Myer Horowitz Theatre. He'll be leaving the Cuban brass section in Cuba, but you can get your fill of Havana horns on his latest album, *Exit Strategy of the Soul*, 7 p.m.

OCTOBER 4

celebration | **THE ART OF CREATION** Sorry: Jesus isn't offering an acrylic workshop, but there will be workshops available to everyone interested in celebrating women in art at this multimedia marketplace and concert event. Bonnie Doon Hall, 12 p.m.

OCTOBER 5

market | **DOLL, TEDDY, AND TOY SALE** Kids are tough on toys. Melted G.I. Joes... Barbie dolls with bad haircuts that don't grow back. Maybe it's time to replenish little Johnny and Susie's toy chest. Alberta Aviation Museum, 10 a.m.

OCTOBER 6

learning | **WHAT WILL THE ECOSPHERE REQUIRE OF US?** Dr. Wes Jackson, the president of the Land Institute in Kansas, wants to enlighten you about sustainable agriculture. Don't lie: you've been waiting for this all year. Location Faculty Club, 5:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 7

learning | **SCIENCE CAFE** Car starters, mobile cellular telephones, mojo wires. It's a scary world out there, and now the Telus World of Science wants to discuss something called nanotechnology. What is this - voodoo magic? 6:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 8

theatre | **CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD** Mark Medoff won a Tony when his play ran on Broadway from 1980-82. Then the 1986 film adaptation earned Marlee Matlin the Oscar for Best Actress. This one has potential. Waltherdale Playhouse.

OCTOBER 9

music | **IRON & WINE** Funny story - while Samuel Beam was shooting the film *A Childish Wish For Snow* he stumbled upon a corner store remedy called "Beef Iron & Wine," and his band name was born. Maybe he should have kept the beef. Myer Horowitz Theatre.



Iron & Wine, Myer Horowitz Theatre, Oct. 9

music | October 2

“SHERYL CROW IS A MILF: A MUSICALLY INCLINED LYRICAL FEMALE, THAT IS. WHAT DID YOU THINK WE MEANT?”

see magazine's two-week forecast of events in edmonton

listings: city pg. 18 | music pg. 42 | film caps pg. 47 | arts pg. 52 |

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“AS A CHILD CARE PROVIDER AND A PARENT, I WANT SOME STABILITY.”
—VIVIAN TURNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GARNEAU/UNIVERSITY CHILD CARE CENTRE

FEDERAL ELECTION • CHILD CARE • BY ANGELA BRUNSCHOT | 768 words

Nursery Room Politics



Limited Space | At the Garneau/University Child Care Centre, the waiting list is one and a half to two years long. PHOTO BY IAN JACKSON

THE LIBERALS AND NDP ROLL OUT A BUGGYFUL OF NEW (AND NOT-SO-NEW) CHILD CARE PLATFORMS

Like many daycare workers, Vivian Turner has witnessed her fair share of tearful moments, and often the ones in emotional distress are not the toddlers in her care, but parents with little ones at home and no place to send them when their maternity or parental leave ends.

Despite new election funding announcements from both the NDP and the Liberals, none of the federal parties have offered a plan that properly addresses the immediate need for child-care spaces, says Turner, the executive director of the Garneau/University Child Care Centre.

The federal Liberals have promised a child tax benefit of \$350 per year per child, in addition to the Conservatives' current \$100 monthly cheques. The NDP promise a national child-care system similar to health care.

Taking their proposed Early Learning & Child Care Act and turning it into an election plank, the NDP would also require provincial governments to show that federal dol-

lars were indeed spent on child care.

During Alberta's provincial election, Bill Moore-Kilgannon lead a campaign to find out what happened to \$26 million dollars in federal child care funding which was transferred to Alberta. The executive director of Public Interest Alberta, an umbrella organization of unions and social justice groups, filed a freedom of information request to track the money, which was put in general revenue before going towards child care programs, he says.

"You can't just ship off a bunch of money to the provinces and hope

care. Certainly, the provinces have the authority to administer the programs, but Martin feels there should be stings attached to the funding.

The NDP would invest \$1.45 billion in child care in the first year of the program, in addition to the current \$100 cheques currently given directly to parents. (The NDP have not yet released details of how they will fund their campaign pledges.)

Turner supports the idea of a universal child care program. "As a child care provider, and a parent, I want some stability," she says, regardless of the political situation at either the

home should not be penalized.

In the 2005 election, the Conservatives promised \$100 monthly cheques for families with children under six years old. The Tories delivered, but with daycare in Alberta costing an average of \$649 per month, according to the provincial government, the issue has not disappeared. (At the time, Liberal staffer Scott Reid called the cheques "beer and popcorn" money.)

Moore-Kilgannon has no problem with giving young families income support, but argues that the \$100 cheques should be targeted at low-

workers such as doctors and nurses the province desperately needs. And one income is not always enough to support a family. Single parents have an especially hard time because they don't have a partner to help pay the bills. Support from grandparents and other extended family networks are not available to all families, she adds.

The Grits have promised to keep the Tories' \$100 cheques, in addition to a \$350-per-year-per-child tax benefit. The Liberals will also invest money directly into developing child care spaces, topping out after four years at \$1.25 billion annually. The increase will be covered by taxes collected through the proposed Green Shift election plan.

Stephanie Laskoski, the newly nominated Liberal candidate in Edmonton-East, says the Liberal plan will focus on regulation, ensuring quality care.

But the Liberals under Paul Martin promised a similar program in the 2004 election, and long before that as well, under Jean Chrétien.

"I can't comment on past governments," Laskoski says. "I can only comment on the plan today."

abrunschot@see.greatwest.ca

THE LIBERALS UNDER PAUL MARTIN PROMISED A SIMILAR PROGRAM IN THE 2004 ELECTION, AND LONG BEFORE THAT AS WELL UNDER JEAN CHRÉTIEN "I CAN'T COMMENT ON PAST GOVERNMENTS," SAYS LIBERAL EDMONTON-EAST CANDIDATE STEPHANIE LASKOSKI.

they do the right thing," says Ray Martin, the NDP candidate in Edmonton-East. (He lost his seat in the provincial legislature as the MLA for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview in March to Tory Tony Vandermeer.)

Martin believes the federal government does have a role to play in important social programs like child

federal or provincial levels.

But even Martin says it will take years to establish a nationwide system, and Turner has parents waiting now.

Whatever party forms government after the Oct. 14 election must offer a range of choices, Turner says, adding that parents who chose to stay at

and middle-income Canadians who need the money. "Just don't call it a child care plan," he says.

For her part, Turner wants more flexibility. Staying at home is not always an option for parents, she says, adding that many of the parents served by the Garneau/University Child Care Centre are highly skilled



WITNESS

SEPT. 20, 2008 | 15:07:52 PM | PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

Edmontonians catch a glimpse of how refugees have to live around the world, at the Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders display "A Refugee Camp in the Heart of the City" at McIntyre Park on 83rd Avenue.

OUR COMMENT ON THIS WEEK'S NEWS

EDMONTON • POLICE HUMANS BEFORE MACHINES!

Police chief Mike Boyd, along with Calgary police chief Rick Hanson, are asking the province for increased funding to hire more police officers in the two cities.

Boyd should have thought about the need for actual police officers on Edmonton streets back in April, when he asked city council for, and was provisionally granted, \$1.65 million to buy a second police helicopter.

If a further investment in security is needed, feet on the ground is always the better option.

After all, when incidents like the Whyte Avenue hockey riot occur, there's no substitute for actual humans.

Maybe council will change its mind. In the spring, city councillors were still willing to entertain spending proposals from all municipal departments.

But come budget time, there are almost always cuts.

ALBERTA • HEALTH CARE TWO TIERS NOTHING NEW

The opening of the Copeman Health Care Centre in Calgary has once again stirred up the privatization debate, and the focus on two-tiered health care sounds narrow and worn-out.

Don't get us wrong: *SEE* doesn't support private clinics with nearly \$3,000 in annual fees. That more of these clinics could open in the province and pull doctors and nurses from the public system poses a serious threat. It's just that many aspects of our health care system are already based on an individual's ability to pay. As anyone who isn't covered by a work benefit plan can tell you, dental and even prescription drugs can take a monster-sized chomp out of your wallet. And for those living on or near the poverty line, it often means going without.

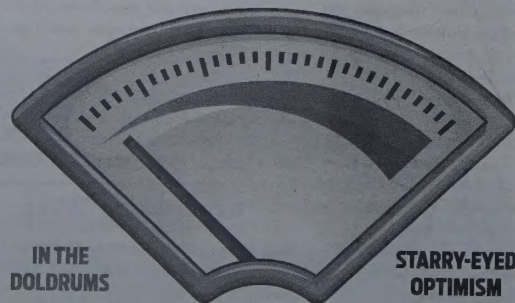
And the Copeman clinic is specializing in exactly the kind of additional services that many people in Alberta don't have access to anyway.

CANADA • ELECTION MEET THE DESPAIR-O-METER!

Albertans know there isn't much competition here during elections. The results might as well already be in — or so we're told by pollsters and pundits. The whole atmosphere encourages a sense of despair — a mood reflected by our new weekly Federal Election Despair-o-Meter (at right).

What else has put us in the doldrums this week? Stephen Harper promises us a visit, but he hardly pays us the attention he lavishes on cities in southern Ontario, Stéphane Dion, Jack Layton, and Elizabeth May have run through Edmonton, and besides adding some excitement to volunteers' and die-hard party members' lives, there's no visible change. As David Suzuki told the *Edmonton Sun* during a conference in Sherwood Park, Albertans can't even bring themselves to discuss the carbon tax. "The minute you say carbon tax, it's like saying national energy program," he quite rightly said. "In Alberta, you say NEP, people go berserk."

DESPAIR-O-METER
GAUGING THE FEDERAL ELECTION
SOURCE: OUR TOTALLY UNSCIENTIFIC, BUT AT LEAST INFORMED, GUT REACTION



LETTERS • QUEER NIGHT CLUB

SEE Readers React To New LGBTQ Club

OPENING NIGHT AT PLAY DISAPPOINTS

I want to share my experience at the newly-opened Play nightclub ("Remembering How To Play," SEE #773) because I have never experienced anything like this ever before.

Last Friday night was supposed to be amazing. It was supposed to mark a "new era" in the Edmonton club scene. What it turned out to be was the most frustrating and disappointing club experience I've ever had.

With the demise of The Roost earlier this year, everyone who'd ever frequented it has been looking forward to the opening of Play nightclub, the self-described "first 'QUEER' club to ever open its doors in this city, where everyone can feel welcome whether you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or straight." Nothing could be further from the truth.

After waiting in line for 90 minutes, we spent another 45 minutes at the front of the line, while no one from either the VIP, or the regular lineup was getting inside. It was complete chaos, no rhyme or reason to anything that was going on. The security guards brought in from the owners' other establishments, were rude, crude, and abusing their situational power over the throngs waiting to get inside. Walking up and down the line, pointing out and bringing groups of people to the front, where they were immediately let in, security guards would shout to the crowd, "First five guys to show me and the crowd their asses get inside."

I was appalled at what I was seeing, thinking to myself, "Did I travel back in time to Studio 54, circa 1979?" I was four years old, but I've seen the movie and that's where this kind of behaviour belongs — in a movie! Maybe the owners should call up the owner of the now-defunct Roost and take a few pointers about the "welcoming everyone in," because all I felt was disgusted. I will not be going to Play, the "welcoming" has left me missing The Roost that much more. Extremely disappointed.

A. KATE MAMOS

PLAY NOT SO FUN

Firstly, I would like to give my regards you [Bob Long], for opening a gay night club ("Remembering How To Play," SEE #773). It has been many years since our city of champions has had an alternative night club open. Walking down Whyte Ave, you can see all the night clubs that are open, or are opening and none of them are for the alternative lifestyle. It's almost like being gay, bi, or transgendered is overlooked.

I had plans to meet with two of my friends, so we could go to Play and see what this new alternative lifestyle bar is all about. We arrived outside of Play around 8:30 p.m., so we could beat most of the lineup. As it got closer to 9 p.m. the line to enter Play was extended past the entrance of the Old Spaghetti Factory. The doors finally opened at 9:30 p.m., 30 minutes late.

By this time City Centre Mall had closed its doors, so if you had to use the restrooms, you had to hold it, otherwise lose your place in line. Slowly but surely the line began to move, and as we neared the entrance to Play, we noticed there was another line on

the other side of the building, which was for VIP guests.

By this time it is nearing 10 p.m., you have the staff walking up and down the side walk with clipboards, handing out advertisements for another evening of fantastic events. The manager of the new club is walking through and choosing random people and allowing them access to the front of the line. I must say that is odd — these people that the manager was choosing didn't have VIP access either. They were just like the rest of us, waiting patiently. What does one need to do to be picked from a crowd of 300 people? Have good looks? Know the right connections? Have loads of money and show up in a limo? But then again why would a manager of an alternative lifestyle bar be choosing based on stereotypes? I thought the gay, lesbian, and transgendered communities were trying to fight stereotypes, not encourage them.

Then one of the event staff announces, "The next five men to pull down their pants and show us your butt, get in." Of the 300 people without VIP access, two men did the dirty deed and showed the rest of us their behinds. Forgive me if I am wrong, but I thought this was an alternative lifestyle bar, so do the women need to show their breasts to get to the front of the line? I doubt it, because I believe that would be a charge under the Criminal Code of Canada as indecent exposure. If this bar is strictly for gay men and does not welcome women, then that would be a violation against the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

It is now nearing 10:30 p.m., and we have waited in line for two hours for access to the new club. A group of ladies in front of me waiting in line. One lady approached a security guard and asked him if she could use the washroom and come back and remain in line. The response from the security guard was: No, you can urinate outside.

About 10 minutes later, a security guard comes out and announces to us that they are at capacity of 250 people, and they will not be allowing anyone else into the club until people begin to leave. When questioned about how many people the club can hold the response was, "We are at capacity and we can not risk breaking city bylaw." Oh, pardon me, now all of a sudden we are going to start abiding by the law?

Within the last two hours of waiting, we had security guards telling a girl to urinate outside because they would not allow her access to the washroom, and we also had "Events Staff" allowing men to show their naked behinds to patrons waiting to get access to the club.

I understand when it's the first day of operations for a new bar that things will likely not go as planned. Examples of such are: running short on change for the bartenders, running low on alcohol, sound system failures, etc. The events listed above were not an operational malfunction. So what is the excuse for the customer service aspect of that night?

STEVE BERNI

PLAY RESPONDS

The staff and managers at Play want to thank everyone for making our opening



Opening Night | Play General Manager Corey Wyness responds to reader comments. PHOTO BY ANDREW PAUL

weekend such a success.

We were absolutely floored and flattered by the line-ups both nights. We were also thrilled to see such a diverse crowd, it warmed our hearts.

We know not everyone made it in, and we know the line-ups were really long. Some waited a long time to get in. Some also weren't able to make it in at all. Thanks for your patience on opening weekend.

We tried to balance the club throughout the night to ensure a broad cross section of people were able to get inside. That meant young and older, male, female, transgendered ... we wanted some members of the whole LGBTQ community to be inside for our grand opening.

Still for those outside we know it's never fun to wait which is why we tried to make the line-up entertaining.

We gave out free Red Bull and we had three members of the promotions team outside talking to people, giving out passes for upcoming events. We also gave away love beads to promote our upcoming long weekend Love Party Series and we did contests including asking a few people to show their buns. We will be doing a best buns contest at the bar on Thursdays and we invited those brave enough to take part to enter the contest in the future.

Play Nightclub will always have a playful and fun spirit. It's a place to relax and let loose. It's a place to leave the seriousness

of the week behind. We are so happy to be filling what is clearly a big need in our community and we hope over the next weeks and months everyone comes down to Play.

Thanks to everyone who came down for making our opening such a great success!

COREY WYNESS, PLAY GENERAL MANAGER

CLARIFICATION

As a result of last week's Calendar [SEE #773, Sept. 18] The Edmonton Bahá'í Centre wishes to clarify that it provides a venue for other organizations to host events, and does not have any connections to the advertising or promotional material associated with events being hosted at the centre.

I Love Edmonton, But Edmonton Is A Sty



OUTSIDE POLITICS MAURICE TOUGAS

WHEN DID IT BECOME ACCEPTABLE TO USE THE CITY OF EDMONTON AS A GIANT GARBAGE PAIL?

So Mayor Stephen Mandel has piped up about cigarette butts littering our streets.

Mandel is angry (which seems to be his fallback emotion) that tens of thousands of those tubular stubs – filled with a lip-smackin' stew of tar, nicotine, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, ammonia, hydrogen cyanide, arsenic, DDT, and spittle – are littering the streets of our grubby little town. And when Mandel is mad, something must be done.

Yes, it's good to be the mayor. The mayor has taken offence at cigarette butts outside of buildings, particularly bars and restaurants where the smoking diaspora gathers in huddled masses, yearning to breathe smokily.

Being against litter is not the most courageous political stand – is any-



PHOTO BY MICHAEL TRAVERS

body in favour of litter? – but he's right. My question is, why stop at cigarette butts?

Let's be blunt here, people. I love Edmonton – it's my hometown, my family lives here, and if I ever make any friends they will live here, too. But Edmonton is a sty. Edmonton is awash in the discarded detritus of daily living. If you don't believe me, just go for a walk and cast your eyes downward. (For the benefit of you young people, a "walk" is a pastime involving voluntary movement of the legs to transport your person from one location to another.)

Take a dozen steps in any direction and you are guaranteed to see some form of litter. It doesn't matter if you're on a quiet residential street or a busy downtown sidewalk. You will see it by the side of the road. You will see lots of it next to the curbs of left-turn lanes, where the breathtakingly inconsiderate among us toss out their fast food garbage while waiting for the light to change. But, you say, this isn't Mayberry. Aren't all cities naturally dirty? No, they are not. It pains me to say this, but Calgary is a much cleaner city than Edmonton. I went to Kelowna

this past summer and it was virtually litter-free despite being home to 100,000 people and an equal number of tourists.

So what can we do? You can't legislate manners, after all. True, but we can work towards creating an environment where litter is seen as an antisocial act.

The city has admirably taken an aggressive approach to graffiti – a form of litter, albeit an artsy one – by investing in giant erasers and charging building owners who don't clear graffiti off their buildings. So what's to stop the city from charging business owners who leave their parking lots in shabby condition, with overflowing garbage cans and litter-filled lots? Or, for that matter, schools that fail to keep their publicly sponsored schoolyards litter-free?

And I would go one step further. Why not make convenience stores and fast food outlets (the trail of trash from a convenience store or a fast food outlet can be followed like Hansel and Gretel's trail of breadcrumbs) responsible for the garbage that comes from their store? The average 7-Eleven sells just under 6,000 Slurpees a month (true fact!), thousands of which are tossed onto the street. Convenience stores made a tremendous profit on their various slush-based drinks (the plastic cup

of a Slurpee is worth more than the Slurpee itself) so why should they not be forced to invest some of that profit in keeping their city clean? Why not make it a law that all retail establishments – convenience stores, fast food outlets, power centres, big box outlets, restaurants, bars, you name it – be responsible for keeping things clean within a radius of 100 yards? If this means forcing the local convenience store to walk around their neighbourhood daily picking up the garbage that comes from their store, so be it.

Much more importantly, we have to change the mindset of people that it is okay to use the city of Edmonton as a giant garbage pail. We have to go into the schools and teach kids that littering is wrong, just as we've taught them that smoking is wrong and drugs are bad. (Okay, maybe not a good example.)

Is it worth the effort? Absolutely. I think a city with a litter problem is a city with a self-esteem problem. If you dump all over it, you are in effect saying that the well-being of your city is of no concern to you.

A trashy city sends a message to visitors that this is a city that has no pride – and that, I'm sad to say, may be truer than we care to admit.

mauricetougas@live.com

COMMENTARY • ELECTION • BY CRAIG ELLIOTT | 170 words

A Little Something On The Side



WHILE OTHER POLITICIANS HAVE OPEN SECRETS, EDMONTON'S RAHIM JAFFER RUNS A QUIET CAMPAIGN

Secrets! They're all the rage on the campaign trail in 2008!

It's election season and everybody who's anybody has a secret, or two. In fact, if you're running for public office and you don't have an alleged secret deal going with some other somebody, or a secret agenda (mildly passé by now, but not totally out of fashion) that voters ought to be highly wary of, or a membership in an ultra-secret religious cabal or a criminal record that wasn't vetted properly or some stupid thing you did or said while cameras rolled or public servants were paying attention, then I'm very sorry, my friend, but you just don't rate. I'm talking to

you, Gilles Duceppe.

Take, for instance, Green leader Elizabeth May and Liberal leader Stéphane Dion, who have a little secret something going, or so some will tell you.

Apparently, she's really a Liberal. (Or maybe he's really a Green?) The story is based on a couple of premises – one, that May once expressed a preference for Dion as prime minister (after herself, of course), and two, that the Liberals and Greens agreed not to run candidates against one another's leaders. As "news"

Emery, of Marijuana Party fame (at least according to Emery), whereby, in return for Mr. Layton's continued efforts to decriminalize/legalize pot, Emery would continue to send votes his way. Layton either doesn't remember his appearance on pot tv at all, or else he really, really, really didn't want to talk about it when it came up last weekend. Okay, fine. Dude doesn't want to talk about the one part of his party's platform that could actually steal him some libertarian votes that would otherwise go to the prime minister's very own

Conservative candidate. In my riding of Edmonton-Strathcona, since 1997, this person has been my MP, Rahim Jaffer.

I've seen the lawn signs, so I know he's still the Conservative candidate, but after that, what? He's represented this riding in Ottawa for a decade, but the most notable thing he's ever done is have his assistant impersonate him during a radio interview, and that story's even mustier than the May/Dion thing.

But what does Jaffer do while he's in Ottawa? Just try and find out. What's

society of Alberta on the 25th.

Will he show up? It's a secret. Is there anything he's got to say in his own words about his efforts – past, present or future – to represent his constituents? Maybe something along the lines of, "Shhhh..."

Interestingly, if you Google News Mr. Jaffer, you learn a whole lot more information about Linda Duncan, the NDP candidate in this riding, than you do about him. This cannot be an easy thing to accomplish, and yet Jaffer makes it look downright simple. This guy keeps things more on the down-low, the Q-T, the just-between-him-and-the-fencepost, than Prime Minister Fencepost ... er, Harper himself!

Oh wait, no. He's running a complete non-campaign, presumably, because that's how Harper tells him to do it, because that's the sort of representation Harper wants us to have.

And so, that makes the only real secret to be solved in Edmonton-Strathcona the same as in every other Alberta riding, where we habitually return Conservatives to Ottawa for no discernible reason, and it starts with: "Why the hell...?"

THE LIBERALS AND THE GREENS AGREED NOT TO RUN CANDIDATES AGAINST ONE ANOTHER'S LEADERS. AS "NEWS" GOES IT'S A LITTLE MUSTY, AND IT TAKES MORE PARSING THAN ANYONE BUT THE BITTEREST PARTISANS HAVE TIME FOR.

goes, it's a little musty, and it takes more parsing than anyone but the bitterest partisans have time for, but if election time isn't the time for bitter partisanship, when exactly is?

But hey, it seems Jack Layton's got a little something going on the side too, with none other than Marc

party? Unless he's just being coy and waiting for the exact right moment, some secrets aren't worth keeping.

No discussion of secrets is complete without the old Cons, eh? Now, if your riding is anything like mine, then the biggest secret of the campaign is likely to be your very own

he been doing to win votes this time around? Apart from a prominently placed ad hominem attack on Jack Layton, courtesy of Monte Solberg, the Jaff's website lists three campaign-related items: two different meet-and-greets on Sept. 20 and an all-candidates' forum at the Univer-

“IF EVERY CIGAR AND/OR PIPE SMOKER DROPPED DEAD TOMORROW, IT WOULD **HARDLY MAKE A NOTICEABLE BLIP IN THE MORTALITY STATISTICS IN THIS COUNTRY.**

— BURLINGTON TOBACCONISTS OWNER CHRIS HANSEN

LIFESTYLE • ACQUIRED TASTES • BY ANDREW PAUL [132] words

They've Taken All The Fun Out Of Habano

CHRISTOPHER HANSEN SAYS CASUAL CIGAR SMOKERS HAVE BECOME COLLATERAL DAMAGE IN THE ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN

Much like unprotected sex, smoking has become one of those social norms that were once common pastimes for many but have now been banished to the ice floes. Once the “cool” habit of movie stars like Humphrey Bogart and Audrey Hepburn, smoking is now seen as a poisonous, dirty habit that causes cancer, emphysema, impotence, halitosis, litter, and ultimately death. According to Health Canada, 37,000 Canadians will die “prematurely” as a direct result of smoking — meaning that, on average, smokers have a life expectancy eight years shorter than people who don’t light up.

But that may depend on what you smoke, according to Christopher Hansen, owner of Burlington Tobacconists on Whyte Avenue. He thinks that while the stats are irrefutable, cigar smoking is a complex culture that has been unfairly tainted.

Hansen has a problem with cigarette smokers who, he says, have killed the fun for the cigar and pipe smoking community — a community he feels practices a safer, more responsible love of tobacco. He defended his stance to *SEE Magazine*.

SEE: You’re a tobacco merchant who prefers not to sell cigarettes. Why is that?

Christopher Hansen: I have a bit of a quandary about cigarette smoking. I’m not a cigarette smoker — I am a cigar smoker and pipe smoker, a fact that is clearly stated on my business card. And quite frankly, if it wasn’t for cigarette smoking, the difficulties that cigar and pipe smokers are having in enjoying their cigars and pipes wouldn’t exist.

SEE: What do you mean by that?

CH: The whole anti-smoking movement is being driven by cigarette smoking, not by cigar and pipe smoking. If every cigar and/or pipe smoker dropped dead tomorrow, it would hardly make a noticeable blip in the mortality statistics in this country compared to cigarette smokers.

SEE: What similarities are there between the two camps?

CH: To me, the only similarity between the two is that they both contain tobacco, but even in that case, the tobacco itself is a completely different species. The most common

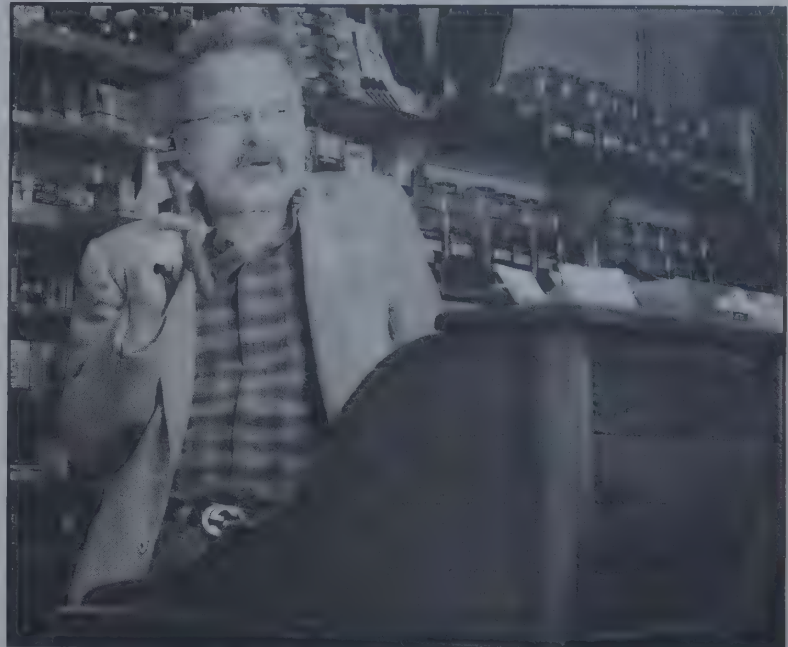
tobacco used in cigarettes is Golden Virginia — a tobacco I doubt you would ever find in a cigar anywhere. Also there’s no attempt to maximize nicotine in the tobacco used for cigars and or pipes. Cigar companies don’t view their product the same way cigarette companies view their product. Cigars are not a nicotine delivery system; they are a luxury good meant to reward yourself, and if used properly the consequential health risks are minimal compared to cigarette smoking.

SEE: What evidence do you have to support that claim?

CH: I have several MDs that are customers who are cigar or pipe smokers. I don’t have a single one that I’m aware of who smokes cigarettes. I have all kinds of customers that might smoke one cigar a week, or one a month or even just one or two a year, and I know pipe smokers that have similar consumption habits. I have customers who only smoke their pipe on Christmas Day, and the other 364 days a year they have no problem putting it away and forgetting about it. Very few cigarette smokers limit themselves to one cigarette a year.

SEE: How many cigars do you smoke in a day?

CH: It would be very rare to exceed two — except when duty calls. There’s an event that takes place every year in Cuba in February called the Festival del Habano. It’s a week-long celebration of cigars, and when I’m at the festival I could be smoking anywhere from five to seven cigars a day, and I’ll be doing that every day for, like, 10 days



That's One Big Stogie | Chris Hansen, owner of Burlington Tobacconists, casually twirls a cigar while musing about those bastard cigarette smokers who thwart him. PHOTO BY MERYL SMITH LAWTON

form of behaviour, but it’s a professional obligation when I’m in Cuba.

SEE: Would you consider cigar smoking a vice?

CH: Oh, good grief, no. Like anything if it’s done excessively or incorrectly I suppose you could consider it a vice, but when done properly, no, I wouldn’t think of it as a vice, and I would actually defy any objective evaluator to reach that conclusion. So nope, not at all.

cigars), you would light your cigar with something called a cedar spill. Think of it as a cedar match without the sulphur. The technique, regardless of what source of heat you’re using, should never involve you allowing the flame to actually touch the end of the cigar. You’re just trying to warm it up to its natural combustion point. As far as putting a cigar out, that’s a simple one. The best thing to do with a cigar when you’re finished

sure you’re aware, contains an express exemption for establishments that sell only tobacco and tobacco related products and do not permit anyone under the age of 18 in their store. So we are clearly covered by the first criteria: we sell only tobacco and tobacco related products and we actually haven’t let anyone under the age of 18 into the store, at least not knowingly, since 2005. We sort of anticipated that sort of criteria. So to that extent, the regulations haven’t affected my business at all, and if they’ve had any impact, I’d expect it to be slightly positive.

SEE: What do you have to say to all of the cigar and pipe enthusiasts out there?

CH: We find ourselves living in very peculiar times if you enjoy fine tobaccos. There is some sense amongst the part of the community that it is just the pendulum swinging. I think it will be a long time before the pendulum swings back, but my sympathies aren’t with the masses of cigarette smokers that the legislation has been targeted at. It really is with the cigar and pipe smokers, who are, for all intents and purposes, collateral damage in the anti-smoking campaign. So my message to them would be to just grin and bear it. We’ll get through this one match at a time.

YOUR LUNGS ARE ONLY PERIPHERALLY INVOLVED IN SMOKING A CIGAR. WHEN IT COMES TO PIPE AND CIGAR SMOKING, YOU’RE NOT SUPPOSED TO INHALE. IT’S ALL ABOUT THE TASTE. YOU DON’T HAVE TASTE BUDS IN YOUR LUNGS, SO WHY GO TO ALL THAT EXTRA EFFORT TO INHALE?

SEE: That must feel like getting kicked in the lungs.

CH: No, of course not. Absolutely not. Your lungs are only peripherally involved in smoking a cigar. When it comes to pipe and cigar smoking, you’re not supposed to inhale. It’s all about the taste. You don’t have taste buds in your lungs, so why go to all that extra effort to inhale? The smoke should never go into your lungs; it can be a bit of a burden on the taste buds, though. I’ll certainly admit to that, but I’d never recommend smoking that much to a customer. Quite frankly, it’s an excessive

SEE: What are some misconceptions about the proper way to consume a cigar?

CH: There are many popular myths or misconceptions about cigar smoking. The most common one would be the almost compulsive desire to want to lick your cigar, which really shouldn’t be necessary. There are misconceptions about how to properly light a cigar and misconceptions about how to extinguish a cigar. How you light a cigar all depends on the circumstances. If you were invited to smoke a cigar with the Queen (and apparently she occasionally smokes

smoking it is to simply put it in the ashtray and let it go out by itself. You don’t actually butt it out like you do a cigarette. If you’ve ever been in a room the morning after, say, a poker game with a lot of cigar smoking going on, you’ll notice a fairly pronounced stale cigar smell because those cigars were probably butted out. When you butt them out, you triple or quadruple the surface area of that end of the cigar and that’s where the odour is emanating from.

SEE: How have the new smoking bylaws affected your business?

CH: Well, the legislation, as I’m



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UPDATE! QUITTING SMOKING - BY ANDREW PAUL & FAWNDA MITHRUSH | 670 words

It Seemed Like A Good Idea At The Time...

TWO WEEKS AGO THEY VOWED TO QUIT SMOKING. THIS WEEK WE CHECK BACK TO SEE IF THEY'VE RELAXED AT ALL

Fawnda: Day 15. Still alive. In some way, I haven't bought a pack, at least. My caffeine intake has tripled (which would probably be a lethal dosage to anyone without a writer's tolerance). I've been reading more: when I get a strong nicotine craving, I'll run outside and crack open a book or magazine, even one of those Mormon pamphlets - anything I can get my hands on to distract my racing mind. Otherwise, things are looking up. My skin feels spunkastic, things taste better. I think I may even be getting taller. And I must say, there's been quite a lot of support coming back since we came out as quitters. So Andrew, have you succumbed to the beast?

Andrew: Okay, I admit it - I am weak. The pressure was just too much to handle. My first transgression came almost 72 hours to the minute after we publicly denounced tobacco in all its forms. The most

unfortunate consequence was that I dragged you, poor Fawnda, down the ugly tunnel of relapse shame right along with me. I became the stereotypical ambassador from the proverbial "wrong crowd" - a peer-presurist looking for company to join me in my weakest moment. Bring on the sweaty ass-crack, baby. It serves me right.

Fawnda: I had moments of relapse too, dear Andrew. I couldn't possibly justify holding you to our smoke-off-a-nasty-ass-crack bet, especially since I had a drag after that gut-wrenching moment last week when the stage tech for the play I was directing bailed three days before opening night. I had another while getting into one of those "What the fuck should I do with my life?" conversations with a bottle of shiraz. But that's it, really. Have you relapsed entirely? Are you smoking regularly again? Tsk-tsk. I notice you've been taking a lot more fresh-air breaks.

Andrew: In my defence, I have cut back astronomically. I can't remember the last time a pack lasted me a week - and I did hold out buying one for almost a week and a half. I've realized quitting cold turkey isn't an option for me. I need chemical assistance. With Big Pharma on my side, I can do anything. I was thinking of trying Champix before they yank it off the shelf. They say it causes people to commit suicide, but they also say it's guaranteed to stop you from

smoking. The ironic part is that once you start smoking, you can never truly quit until you're dead. Until then you're just a statistic waiting to relapse. And no, this isn't a cry for help. What smoking-related disease scares you the most?

Fawnda: The cancer's obviously scary. But for vanity's sake, I'd say the prospect of premature aging frightens me most. Look at poor Bette Davis - she looked like a wide-eyed raisin by the time she kicked it (at 81, mind you). I mean, she was the coolest bitch ever, but still. I bet Davis' shriveled smoker's mug is the only reason Katharine Hepburn edged her out for the top spot in the AFI poll of the greatest actresses of all time. No one puts Bette at #2. No one. Well, now that I've conquered smoking, perhaps it's time to give up something else. Theatre, perhaps?

Andrew: Abstinence has never been my style, but for argument's sake, I could make a compromise and give up giving things up. Mark Twain said it best: "There are people who strictly deprive themselves of each and every eatable, drinkable, and smokable which has in any way acquired a shady reputation. They pay this price for health. And health is all they get for it. How strange it is." When I kick the bucket I want every organ and bone to be used or abused to its maximum potential - lecherous, I know, but Mark Twain is a bad influence.

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- 1 Just Dance, Lady GaGa
- 2 I Kissed A Girl, Katy Perry
- 3 Whatever You Like, T.I.
- 4 Disturbia, Rihanna
- 5 When I Grow Up, The Pussycat Dolls
- 6 In the Ayer, Flo Rida
- 7 A Milli, Lil Wayne
- 8 Lollipop, Lil Wayne
- 9 Got Money, Lil Wayne
- 10 Crazy Bitch, Buckcherry

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ROGERS

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SMOKING BY THE NUMBERS

According to the 1996 Public Health Agency of Canada study the various forms of cancer related to tobacco consumption killed 11,895 males and 5,523 females for a total of 17,418 deaths.

• **Cardiovascular disease** killed 12,005 males and 6,228 females. (Total: 18,233)

• **Respiratory diseases** killed 5,578 males and 3,563 females. (Total: 9,141)

• **Smoking-related pediatric diseases** killed 90 males and 60 females under the age of one. (Total: 150)

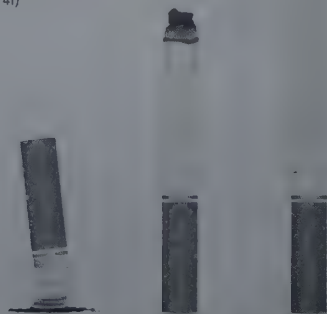
• **Deaths caused by fires as result of lit tobacco products** killed 29 males and 12 females. (Total: 41)

• Health Canada has also found that the number of smokers in Alberta between 1985 and 2003 has decreased from 36 per cent to 20 per cent.

• The Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey found that in 2007 the average male smoker smoked an average of 17 cigarettes per day. The average female smoker smoked an average of 13.7 cigarettes every day.

For more information on the effects of smoking and how to quit, visit:

• www.hc-sc.gc.ca
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 FOR THE QUALITY, BUT FOR
 THE HERITAGE**

For people of the earth, they were awfully articulate, those farmers who spoke at the Greater Edmonton Alliance's "Shake the Hand That Feeds You" local food action at Southminster-Steinhauer United Church.

A couple hundred eaters had come out on a Saturday morning to collect local food baskets that featured ground beef from a farm in Viking where Brian Rozmahel raises chemical-free "happy cows"; two kilos each of organic potatoes and carrots from Riverbend Farms in northeast Edmonton, home of a unique microclimate that enjoys more frost-free days than anywhere else in Alberta; and a dozen organic, free-range eggs from Sunshine Organic Farms near Warburg, where the Horvath family has resisted the incursion of rampant industry (and EUB spies) to keep producing meat and eggs made out of organically raised grains.

But GEA had put the whole thing on so that we eaters — the word "consumers" was dismissed as derogatory marketing-speak — could meet local food producers face to face and, one by one, a few of them got up to say their piece about trying to farm with integrity in a time when small farmers don't get much respect. They could have scared us with reminders about mass-produced foods contaminated with salmonella or listeria being circulated around the country; they could have pointed to the fuel-intensive, nutrition-depleting practice of transporting produce across great distances, its impact on the environment and the world's fuel supply; or harped on any of the other nightmare scenarios that spring from our dependence upon faraway strangers for a safe, healthy, ever-abundant food supply.

They could have, but they didn't. These food producers talked about things like the heritage of local farming, how they're part of a link with food-growing traditions that enabled people to get established around here in the first place, and about stewardship of the land, the wisdom of growing food in harmony with nature. A few of them noted that there used to be a lot more farmers around here. Naturally Albertans will recognize fellow frontier bootstrappers like ourselves and will want to support



Cabbage Patch, Kid | Janelle Herbert of Riverbend Farm and her daughter Evelyn inspect the crops. PHOTO BY IAN JACKSON

the local economy against remote corporations just looking to suck money out of the region. Right?

We weren't just there to give props to the local producers of food, though we all thought fondly of them when we got home and started sampling their wares — actually, most people got into their bags of crunchy, sweet carrots before they made it to the parking lot with their baskets. GEA, a broad-based coalition of community groups that actually give a rip about the common good in the region, gathered us to talk about the industrialization of prime agricultural land in the province, most pressingly in northeast Edmonton, where that spiffy microclimate I mentioned earlier is being impugned by industrial development. The party line is that development is years away, but

(MSF) in the Park Formerly Known as Gazebo. Surrounded by some 10-year-olds who could barely stand still long enough to ask yet another irrelevant question of our guide, Boelie, who had come all the way from Netherlands to share her first-hand experience of camps in Africa, I got to explore the subsistence-level habitation and Band-Aid-style health and medical facilities that 42 million people around the world call home while war, internecine violence, or merciless nature rages around them.

Being kids, the Grade Fivers in my tour group were most drawn to by the nastiest aspects of refugee existence, from shanty squat toilets shared by 200 — where Boelie demonstrated her own technique — to the ad hoc cholera hospital where denizens of the camp who drank

GEA ORGANIZER MONIQUE NUTTER SAYS TURNING OVER FERTILE FARMLAND TO INDUSTRIAL USE IS LIKE BUILDING A HOUSE WITHOUT A KITCHEN.

GEA is organizing people to get on the stick right now and persuade city council to protect the land from industrial zoning. In the fast-growing Capital Region, noted GEA organizer Monique Nutter, turning over fertile farmland to industrial use is like building a house without a kitchen. This is another good reason to introduce eaters to local farmers.

"If there's no link between consumers and producers, then land is nothing but a commodity," said Farmer Rozmahel during his brief but pithy address. "Market forces become the drivers of the food and land-use policies that will dictate to you what you feed yourself and your family — not flavour, not nutrition, not safety, but profit."

For more information on GEA's local foods and farmland preservation initiatives, visit www.greateredmontonalliance.com.

After a morning of local foods tub-thumping, nothing brightens up a summery September afternoon like a trip to the mock refugee camp set up by Doctors Without Borders

contaminated water are rehydrated intravenously over diarrhea buckets — the inclusion of rubber boots and elbow-length rubber gloves helped fire those young imaginations.

But they asked for seconds of BP-5, the sawdusty enriched biscuit that refugees are issued along with beans and rice to keep them on the healthy side of malnutrition and marveled at the tiny bracelet used by nurses to measure the thickness of infants' upper arms — many of them could only get a couple of fingers through it. Most especially, they asked if they could have souvenir posters, which featured portraits of different refugees from across the globe and their harrowing personal stories.

In the end, you had to be impressed by how many people took time out of a gorgeous fall weekend to line up for a tour of harsh reality, even if it left them pretty overwhelmed by the sheer scope of the problem. And even if some of them could barely stand still. If you missed your chance, never fear: you can take an online tour and get more information at www.refugeecamp.ca.

what's that?

fall fashion

are you sure it's not another couple weeks away?

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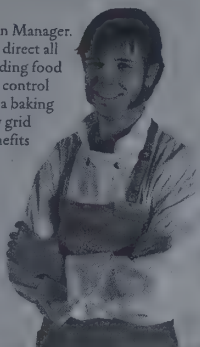
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IMBIBING • GERMAN WHITE • BY MELISSA PRIESTLEY | 194 words

Gee Whiz, That's A Twister



You Say "Fruity" Like It's A Bad Thing | When it comes to Gewurz, it's not a bad thing at all. PHOTO BY MELISSA PRIESTLEY



GEWURZTRAMINER MAY BE A BIT OF A TONGUEFUL AT FIRST, BUT IT'S NICE AND SWEET ON THE WAY DOWN

Fear not the pronunciation of this grape – Gewurztraminer (geh-VERTS-trah-mee-ner) is a mouthful, but if you shorten it to "Gewurz," most people will still know what you are talking about. Or you could get all sassy and refer to it by its German translation: "spiced berry." But beware, your server and friends will look at you pretty weird if you ask for a bottle of spiced berry.

Gewurztraminer is possibly the most recognizable white grape variety. Not only are the actual grapes a distinctive dark pink colour, but the intense aromatics are also a dead giveaway. Smell it once and it will make a permanent imprint in your memory banks: the wine explodes with flamboyant aromas of lychee, roses, Turkish delight, and overripe peach and nectarine; some even smell like talcum powder or scented soap. As the name indicates, there is often a spice component as well, typically ginger and cinnamon, though

cloves and white pepper can also make an appearance.

In addition, the wines are often off-dry – the crazy concentration of fruit suggests sweetness, while the low acidity and high alcohol also contribute to the sugar factor. Good examples will have enough acidity to counterbalance this, but it is not uncommon for Gewurz to be as flabby as a Big Mac-munching American on a beach in Cancun.

Most of the best examples of the grape come from France's Alsace region, where it comprises one-fifth of the region's total plantings. Here it is known as one of the "golden four" varieties (the other three being Riesling, Pinot Gris, and Muscat). However, Gewurz also does well in certain areas of Germany and Austria. It has been planted throughout the world and though it is not hard to find an example from the United States or Canada, the best quality wines outside Alsace and Germany come from New Zealand – especially the regions of Gisborne and Hawke's Bay.

Much of the wine literature out there will have you believe that most grape varieties are temperamental and difficult to vinify, and Gewurztraminer is no exception. (Admittedly, there is some truth to this claim. I'm sure that those unfortunate souls among us who have had their uncle's basement "Zinfandel" will argue in favour of leaving winemaking up to the professionals.) The

grapes need to be grown in a cool climate, as warm weather will rob the grapes of their acidity. Picking time is the most critical determinant of the wine's balance: too early and the wine doesn't have its signature flavours; too late and it is muddy, unfocused soup.

Which is why many argue that Gewurz is best made into a sweet, late-harvest wine, the likes of which are some of the most beautiful desert wines out there. Alsace is, naturally, most famous for this style. There are two classifications: the sweet Vendange Tardive, and the even sweeter Sélection de Grains Nobles (SGN), made from grapes exposed to botrytis/noble rot. Both pack a mind-blowing wallop of flavour (think orange-ginger marmalade, honey, and toffee) and can be thick enough to pour on pancakes. But alas, they will also pack a wallop on your wallet.

Gewurztraminer's unique combination of sweetness and spice makes it one of the very few wines that can successfully pair with spicy cuisine – for those chili-laden stirfries choose an off-dry wine that has lower alcohol (less than 13 per cent, as alcohol exaggerates heat) and higher acidity. Gewurz's voluptuous flavours also pair well with fatty foods, such as pâté, duck, goose, and pork. Foie gras also pairs well – but only if you don't have a conscience. (Poor little geese...)

DINING • FANCY FINE • BY SCOTT LINGLEY | 827 words

An Untarnished Reputation



Try The Braised Bison Short Ribs | Our taste buds are still screaming for them. PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

THE COPPER POT'S BRAND-SPANKING NEW MENU IS GIVEN A TEST DRIVE, AND WHAT A WILD RIDE IT WAS

THE COPPER POT
101, 9107-110 ST. 452-7800.

The last time I wrote about the Copper Pot, I reminisced about the days in my misspent youth when the same space held a held a shiny middlebrow restaurant called Crackerjacks that hosted live music of a frequently loud and rambunctious variety.

There I saw an early incarnation of The Wheat Chiefs (featuring the Belke Bros. of SNFU fame), and a band from California called Tupelo Chain Sex, whose singer Limey Dave used one of the mirrored pillars near the stage to sketch Wayne Gretzky in lipstick, buns-up-kneelin', before ritually sodomizing the image with a hot dog during the song "Chili Dog Wrap." I bet the people at the Copper Pot hate it when I tell that story.

It's sure not the room it was back then — the Copper Pot commands the same lovely view of Ezio Farone Park and the river valley, but the warm interior is all swathed in dark swooping fabric, with roomy yet cozy booths oriented toward the aforementioned panorama and a curtained-off private dining room to the east. The sun sinking over the construction crane skyline of the university, a bottle of Chilean cabernet and a basket of oven-fresh bread with whipped butter — a million miles from the violated hockey icons, sweaty punk bands, and Drummond Dry on tap of yore.

We had no idea when we decided to celebrate something or other with a spur-of-the-moment fancy meal, but the Copper Pot was that very evening launching a new menu. This was most propitious as the updated bill of fare seemed squarely aimed at the kinds of food I go in for — en-

trées that cry out for capital letters like Wild Mushroom and Cashew Crusted Lamb, Espresso Rubbed Bison Rib Eye and Sea Bass and Fennel Risotto. That's some serious-sounding food, no?

Unbelievably, I didn't order any of those things because one dish allowed me to try both Braised Bison Short Ribs and House Made Duck Sausage — not to mention seasonal vegetables and buttermilk mashed potatoes (\$30).

My co-diner had avouched her desire for seafood before we even left home and chose the Sea Bass & Halibut Duo (\$25). The salads — one spinach, one organic greens (\$6 each for starter) — seemed less gravid by comparison.

But they were really good. I had wavered before ordering the green

at the CP. My tastebuds are still crying for how much they miss the two bison short ribs and rounds of duck sausage, shellacked in a dark reduction, lovingly buttressed against a hummock of mashed potatoes and a garland of vegetables, including a hypnotic wheel of bright pink beet and sprigs of baby asparagus.

As a regular consumer of bison, I know from experience that its relatively low fat content makes it really easy to wreck, so I was astonished by the exacting tender substantiality of the shortribs. A comparison to beef doesn't really do the bison justice — it has a flavour and a texture all its own and the kitchen did it lip-smacking justice. The rich potatoes were as much a condiment as a side.

Did I mention there was also duck sausage, fresh-made that afternoon,

**THE TAB: \$67 FOR TWO (FOOD ONLY)
THE GIST: FABULOUS NEW MENU, GREAT VIEW,
A CASUAL-FANCY NIGHT OUT
AVOID: THE POLITICIANS**

salad, wanting to match my ingredient-y supper with an equally baroque starter, but I was really glad once I got the salad. It was perfect — organic greens crunchy with vitality, a refreshing mesclun of endive, frie-sée, radicchio, rocket, and friends; a light, savoury vinaigrette and a bonus sprinkling of creamy goat cheese not previewed on the menu.

The spinach salad was a touch fancier, thanks to the presence of chevre, red pepper spears, dried cranberries, and a House Made Vanilla Vinaigrette (again with the caps), wherein the eponymous flavour seemed to occur as an aroma as much as an aftertaste. Quite impressive.

Now I'm not a guy who goes around having a \$30 plate of food all the time, so when I do I like to make it count. Good Lord, did I make it count

which managed to seem fluffy and was flecked with fresh herbs?

Co-diner's pair of pan-seared fillets were almost as sensational — she always covets whatever I order — the halibut in particular standing up well to the sundried pesto that coated it. Each morsel I stole was moist and meaty, and the vegetable risotto beneath it was something beyond rich.

By the end it was hard to tell if the cabernet had gone to our heads or we had so glutted our senses of taste and smell that we were feeling a little post-orgasmic — in the end it was probably a mélange of the grown-up pleasures we'd imbibed.

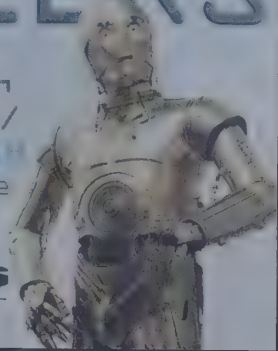
As much as I miss my youth, I'm happy to have one of its landmarks supplanted by a restaurant that lives up to the promise of its capital letter-intensive menu.

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Artists and supporters of Canadian culture will gather in a Town Hall meeting to discuss the recent cuts to arts & culture programs, the upcoming election and what action voters can take.

Please join Tommy Banks and representatives of the arts community to discuss issues within the cultural sector. Our special guest will be Liberal Parliamentarian Bob Rae.

Presented by the Professional Arts Coalition of Edmonton





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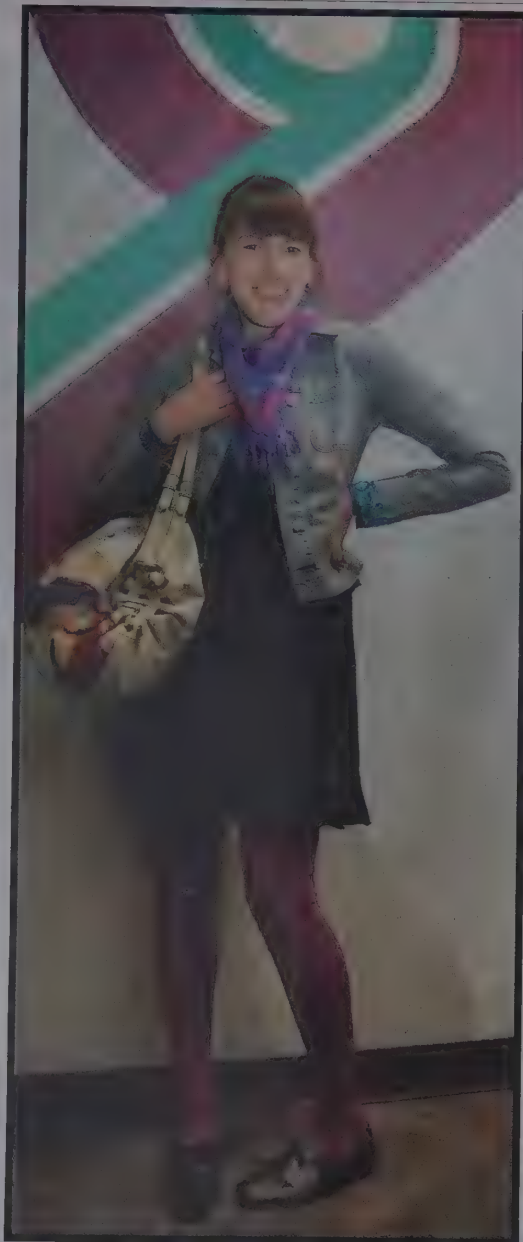
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myLook

Liz Collins | Student, Marvel College

BY ANDREW PAUL

My Look: Straight-up '90s (think Fresh Princess of Bay Station).

Hair: I got my bangs trimmed at Marvel, but I have a hairdresser at The Corner salon in Calgary. I just moved here a month ago.

Wearing: I bought my tights online and my shoes are vintage. I bought them on eBay. I bought the dress in a little boutique in Calgary called Pink Sugar. The only brand new things that I'm wearing are my tights and my dress. I bought this cardigan in Vancouver at Mintage. It has lots of sequins on it, and I like sparkly sequiny things. The jacket and scarf are from thrift stores in Calgary. My bag is from the American Apparel vintage store in Calgary.

Into: I have a solo project — I play music under the name Kittens of Fire. I make jewelry and other stuff.

Want to be in My Look? Send your photo to style@see.greatwest.ca.



15 minutes

Linda Noel | Executive Director, Urban Manor
 PHOTO BY ANDREW PAUL
Q&As WITH EDMONTONIANS
 BY ANDREW PAUL

What is Urban Manor?

We're a hard-to-house facility for men only — "hard-to-house" meaning we house these men under the influence of drugs, alcohol, and those with mental health issues. The majority of the guys who stay here have no desire to rehab. They have got to a point in their lives where they have come to the conclusion that this is pretty much it.

Why did you choose this line of work?

Let's just say that ever since I was little I have always been for the underdog and bringing home strays. Two-legged, four-legged — the throwaways, I guess you could call them.

What do you offer the men who stay here?

We supply them with a roof over their head, three square meals a day plus snacks, access to medical assistance, even ID. We get them on medication if they have no income, we can get them on what we call medical SFI, which will cover their medication, it covers their dental, eyeglasses... just the essentials that we ourselves take for granted.

Where does the Manor's funding come from?

We're primarily funded by the provincial government through (the department of) Municipal Affairs. But we are also a charitable non-profit organization — we depend heavily on outside donations; monetary, clothing, food. And we do give tax receipts.

How much provincial funding do you receive?

Well, that's something we don't want to divulge, but it's definitely not enough. There's never enough. There are always issues with the building, like repairs that come up on a daily basis. It's tough.

How much more money do you need to turn the Manor into the facility you feel it could be?

At least double.

How many men do you have living here?

We have 75 men living with us. We're always full. The majority of fellas who are here have been with us 18-20 years.

What kind of men use your facility?

They've exhausted all of their other options by the time they come here. They have issues

where none of the other agencies have been able to handle them for whatever reason and they end up with us. We are basically the last stop.

If other agencies can't cope with these guys, how do you manage to pull it off?

You have to be non-judgmental. You need the patience of Job and the understanding that when they are under the influence — whether it is drugs or alcohol — this is not the individual we are dealing with at that point; we're dealing with the addiction. These fel-

las under the addiction, as opposed to not, are like Jekyll and Hyde. We manage to see through the addiction to the real person, and these guys are great. They appreciate being here; they constantly volunteer, they do yard work, help in the kitchen. They show their appreciation in any way they can. And in return they appreciate so little, we take them on a day trip somewhere and you would think we'd given them the world. It takes very little for these guys to be happy. We love them — they're our boys.

spin.

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What Alberta visual artists need to know about

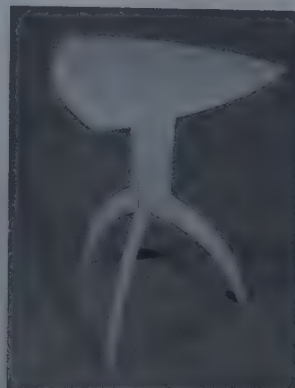
submitting work to the provincial art collection

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts is looking for new art to add to its collection

The provincial art collection is shared with Albertans through many public programs and venues. It helps to foster a greater appreciation and awareness of the visual arts in Alberta.

Submission deadline is October 1, 2008.

To learn more, or to download an application form, visit www.affta.ab.ca/art-collection.shtml or call 780-427-9968 (dial 310-0000 for toll-free access).



Doug Hadram: Trigram, 2007, wood, mill paint, ink, 2008 Spring Art Acquisition purchase.

Alberta Strong Communities

EVENTS

3RD ANNUAL KALEIDO! FAMILY ARTS FESTIVAL THE CARROT COMMUNITY ARTS COFFEEHOUSE SEPTEMBER 26 - This year's Kaleido! Festival will feature art displays and sale events and activities for all ages, including theatre and dance performances, live concerts, film, literary performances, and art workshops for children, adults and families. There will be a "No-Tie" gala on Friday evening, with music by Lionel Ratt. Saturday's Blue Grass Parade Breakfast with live music by Down to the Wood and family carnival are Kaleido's newest additions. On Sunday, Kaleido! plays host to Edmonton's Biggest Ever Block Party. Info: www.artsonthehouse.com

ART TALK: STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE, SEP 25 Discussion with Jeff de Boer. Presented by The Alberta Society of Artists. Doors at 7 p.m. Info: 780-426-0072

COLLOSSEO CHAMPIONSHIP FIGHTING CENTURY CASINO, SEP 26 Mixed martial arts. Info: 780-934-6666

ELECTION DISCUSSION STEEPS TIE LOUNGE, (TITIE WHYTE AVE.) SEP 28 Hosted by the Edmonton Young Communist League. 7-9 p.m. Info: yulco@ualberta.ca

HOW TO FIND THE MAN OF YOUR DREAMS AND MARRY HIM IN 6 MONTHS FANTASYLAND HOTEL, OCT 2 Sponsored by Let's Make it a Date. This ladies only event is designed to give single and divorced women the necessary skills to find their prince charming and learn how to eliminate the frustration in seeking out Mr. Right. Doors 8 p.m. Info: www.letsmakeitadate.com/780-420-1757

MEETINGS

ACCA EVERY MON, INCLUDING HOLIDAYS, 7:30 P.M. BSMT, BRADSHAW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 46 BERNARD DR., ST. ALBERT, CORNER OF BISHOP ST. & SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL AVE. USE NORTH ENTRANCE. Twelve-step support program for adult children of alcoholic and dysfunctional families.

ALBERTA ENTREPRENEURS ASSOCIATION 3RD TUE EVERY MONTH, 9:30-11 P.M. THE FACILITY CLUB, 11435 SASK DR. Guest speakers address topics of interest to burgeoning business folk, and allow for networking opportunities. Pre-register at www.aea.ab.ca

FORWARD THINKERS TOASTMASTERS CLUB TUE, 7 P.M. STRATHCONA COUNTY BUILDING, 2001 SHERWOOD DRIVE, SHERWOOD PARK. Build self-confidence and communication skills. Info: 780-922-3855

FRENCH CONVERSATION TALK ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE, #202, 8627 RUE MARIE-ANNE GABOURY. Info: Godfrey, 780-469-0399

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB 2ND THU EVERY MONTH, 8 P.M. WOODY'S, 2ND FL., 11723 JASPER AVE. Cross-dressers, transsexuals, friends, and supporters meet. Info: 780-387-3343 or groups.yahoo.com/group/edmonton.illusions

INNOVATORS' NETWORKING CLUB TUE, 11:30 AM-1 P.M. CAFE SELECT SOUTH, 109 ST., 84 AVE. Business networking group, mixer, and bond membership drive. Info: Dwayne, 780-463-6240 or dwayneh@bkan.ca

MKP MENS GROUP EVERY MON, 7 P.M. Men's meeting and initiation. Info: www.mkp.org or Garrett, 780-452-5107

NOROTATORS TOASTMASTERS CLUB WED, 7:45 P.M. LONDOERRY PUBLIC LIBRARY, LONDOERRY MALL, 137 AVE. 66 ST. Learn to speak clearly and with confidence in a supportive group. Info: www.norotators.com

NORWOOD TOASTMASTERS CLUB THU, 8-10 P.M. 10425 KINGSWAY AVE. Improve public speaking and communication skills in a fun and educational environment. Info: 780-456-3934 or www.norwoodtoastmasters.org

POWER SPEAKERS TOASTMASTERS CLUB WED 7-9 P.M. GRANT MACLEAN COLLEGE CENTRE FOR THE ARTS, RM 437

Learn to speak with confidence in a supportive environment. Info: 780-732-0693 or www.powerpeakers.ca

TOUTRETE SYNDROME SUPPORT 1ST WED EVERY MONTH (OCT-JUNE), 7 P.M. ACADEMY OF KING EDWARD, 8525 101 ST., NORTH DORR. Meeting for TS adults and parents of TS kids. Info: 1-866-824-9764

UPWARD BOUND TOASTMASTERS CLUB WED, 7-8:30 P.M. RM 601, NORQUEST COLLEGE, 10215 108 ST. Improve listening, speaking, and overall communication skills. Info: Roger 780-454-3720, Theresa 780-488-4098, or adamski@telus.net

WEST-END TOASTMASTER CLUB TUE, 6:45-9 P.M. JASPER PLACE LIBRARY, 9010 156 ST. Friendly environment of personal progress and mutual support. Info: 780-495-5424

WOM-WIRED ON WORDS SUN, 11 AM-1:15 P.M. BANANAS CAFE, CHURCHILL SQUARE An eclectic creative writing group welcoming both professional and amateur writers. Suggested donation \$10. Monthly meetings. Info: bewell2008@gmail.com

YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE 2ND FRI EVERY MONTH, 5 P.M. REMEDY CAFE, 8631 109 ST. For discussion topics and suggested readings go to www.facebook.com/group.phpgid-355921504

HEALTH & WELLNESS

CANADIAN NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE 11205 101 ST. A range of services for members of the Native community, low cost or free beds, housing and clothing referrals. Info: 780-479-1993

COMMUNITY WEIGHT-LOSS CHALLENGE VARIOUS LOCATIONS 6-week course on dieting and active lifestyles. Info: Carla, 780-466-0185

CONSTITUTIONAL YOGA 1ST & 3RD WED, 7 P.M. 10431 37 AVE. A unique healing process, transforming past burdens into positive affirmations. Info: 780-967-9162 or constitutions.com

FREE YOGA CLASS EVERY SUN, 6-7 P.M. LULULEMON ATHLETICA KINGSWAY All levels welcome, new styles each week, mats provided. Info: 780-477-1200 or kingswaygardencommunity@lululemon.com

GENTLE YOGA RADHA YOGA 9946 87 AVE. Weekly classes in small group settings. Sunday Satsang (by donation). Call for schedule and fees. Info: 780-432-3363 or www.radha.org

LIVING POSITIVE TUE, 7-9 P.M. SUITE 50, 9912 106 ST. Confidential space where POC people can discuss and share common issues of concern. A peer-driven AIDS service organization, providing direct support to people living with HIV in Alberta. Info: 780-488-5768 or edmlivingpositive.ca

LOTUS SOUL GYM YOGA STUDIO 0516 82 AVE. Multidisciplinary yoga studio offering drop-in and registered classes in hatha, vinyasa flow, Pilates, yoga for runners, pre-natal, post-natal, mommy & me, and partner workshops. All levels welcome. Info: www.lotussoulgym.com, 780-434-9642 or info@lotussoulgym.com

MADELINE SANAM FOUNDATION 3RD & 4TH SAT EVERY MONTH, 9 A.M.-5 P.M. FACULTE SAINT-JEAN, 8406 91 ST., RM 3-18. An organization for the emancipation and autonomy of African women, providing programs on economy, community health, training on HIV-AIDS prevention, treatment, and harm reduction. French, English and African languages. Admission free for members, membership \$10. Info: 780-490-7332

MEDITATION AND BUDDHIST TEACHINGS GADEN SAMTEN LING TIBETAN BUDDHIST MEDITATION SOCIETY, 11403 101 ST. Meditation and Buddhist teachings by resident teacher, Tibetan Buddhist monk Kushok Lobzang

Dhamchoe. Beginners Tue 7 p.m. Intermediate Wed 7 p.m. Advanced practices Sun 11 a.m. Info: 780-479-0014 or www.gadensanteliving.org

MS ACTIVE NOW #150, 9405 50 ST. Recreation and physical wellness programs. Info: 780-471-3034

RADHA YOGA VARIOUS LOCATIONS Classes include gentle hatha, hidden language/reflective hatha, dream yoga, kundalini/power of choice and meditation. Info: 780-432-3363, class dates at www.radha.org/edmonton

RAJA YOGA MEDITATION #208, 10322 105 ST. In association with Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization. Info: www.bksworld.org, 780-425-1050

RESTORATIVE YOGA MON-THU BY APPOINTMENT, 10355 105 ST. Learn restorative, vinyasa yoga, and pilates for individuals and small groups. Eight class card pass for \$54. Info: 780-478-3773

RIVER VALLEY RUNNERS TUE & THU, 5:15-6:45 P.M. RIVERDALE COMMUNITY HALL, 9231 100 AVE. Coached training for running on Edmonton's extensive river valley trails. Includes warm up and cool down. Info: www.rivervalleyrunners.ca, 780-477-3909

TOPS: TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY THU, 6:30-7:30 P.M. ALLENDALE COMMUNITY LEAGUE, 6330 105A ST. Weight loss support and information. First meeting is free. Info: TOPS4990@hotmail.com

TRANQUILITY MEDITATION & BUDDHIST PRACTICE WED, 7 P.M. 10502 70 AVE. Tibetan kagyu tradition. Free, beginners welcome. Instruction available. Info: Lama Ari Kunsang, resident teacher, 780-633-6157 or www.karmashilling.ca

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LEARNING

AFRICAN DANCE CLASSES 10275 JASPER AVE. Movements, the Afro-Caribbean dance ensemble, offers African dance classes and workshops at all levels. Info: 780-415-5211 or www.movementdance.com

BEDOUIN HEATS MIDDLE EASTERN DANCE 2ND FLOOR, 12326 JASPER AVE. For all skill levels. Info: 780-722-9173 or denise@cozabellbelle.com

EDMONTON JANE AUSTEN SOCIETY STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY, SEP 27 The Edmonton Jane Austen Society invites you to join us for a visit to Pride and Prejudice classic scenes. Bridget Toms has created splendid readings that underline what we love best about Austen. We will also discuss the recent Citadel production of P&P, a new adaptation by Tom Wood. 2-4 p.m. Info: edmontonausten@yahoo.ca/780-479-1179

EDMONTON WEAVERS' GUILD Classes on weaving, spinning and various workshops. Info: Sonja, 780-425-152 or ewg@edmonton.com

EDMONTON WRITERS' CENTRE STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY, 87 CHURCHILL SQUARE A creative space for writers of all genres and levels. Hours: Mon-Fri 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Sat 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Sun 1-5 p.m. Info: 780-498-7070

FABA WORKSHOPS The Film and Video Arts Society offers one-night workshops twice a month in a variety of media activities. Info: www.faba.ca/780-429-1671

FLAMENCO LESSONS SUN & MON, 2:30-3:30 P.M. Judith and Oscar Jose Garcia teach both Flamenco dance & guitar. Info: 1-800-349-4843 or ogarcia@telusplanet.net

KARATE INSTRUCTION Classes for kids over 10, teens, and adults. Info: www.maratidown.com or 780-975-6910

NORTHERN RIVER KARATE SCHOOL TUE, THU & SAT, BELGRAVIA COMMUNITY HALL, 11540 73 AVE. Weekly classes

in Karate, Kobudo, Yoga, Qi Gong, and Siting Meditation. Info: www.threetables.com

SALSA LESSONS WED & THU, LA KANTHA LATIN CLUB, 10805 105 AVE. Free salsa lessons every WED and THU. Info: 780-428-2665

QUEER

AGAPE EDUCATION FACILITY, U OF A CAMPUS Focus group on sex and gender differences in education and culture. Pre-service and practicing teachers, community members welcome. Info: andee.grace@ualberta.ca or 780-492-0772

EPIS/LGBTQ LIAISON COMMITTEE The EPIS/LGBTQ Liaison Committee is composed of a variety of concerned lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, two-spirited, queer, allied community members, and police officers. Email questions or concerns to epislgbt@yahoo.ca. All inquiries treated with confidentiality and respect. To report a hate or bias motivated crime, contact the EPS Hate & Bias Crime Unit, 780-421-3489

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus-based organization for LGBTQ faculty, graduates, academic & staff. Straight allies welcome. Monthly meetings. Info: kwellis@ualberta.ca or mwonham@ualberta.ca

PRIDE CENTRE 9540 111 AVE., 780-488-3234. Hours: TUE-FRI 11-10 p.m. SAT 12-6 p.m. Drop-in, library, and community internet services are available. Online newsletter: TUE-FRI 11-10 p.m., SAT 12-6 p.m. Info: 780-488-3234 or a.pridecentre@edmonton.org

TEAM EDMONTON A volunteer operated, non-profit society for members and friends of the GLBT community, offering well organized and fun sporting events and other recreational activities within a positive social framework. Info: www.teamedmonton.ca

WOMONSPACE Non-profit lesbian organization for Edmonton and surrounding area. Organized monthly activities. Memberships available, including monthly newsletter. Confidentiality assured. Info: www.gaynada.com or womonspace.womonspace@gmail.com, or 780-482-1794

YOUTHSPACE PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON, 9540-111 AVE. An after-school drop-in program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans-identified, queer, questioning, and allied (GLBTQ&A) youth under 25. Open TUE-SAT 3-7 p.m. Info: brendan@pridecentreedmonton.org or 780-488-3234

THURSDAY

BI-SEXUAL WOMEN'S COFFEE GROUP 2ND THU EVERY MONTH, 7:30 P.M. A social group for bi-curious and bi-sexual women. Info: groups.yahoo.com/group/bwcoedmonton

LGBT SENIORS DROP IN 1:30-3:30 P.M. PRIDE CENTRE, 9540 111 AVE. Social meeting for seniors of all genders. Info: 780-488-3234

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB 2ND THU EVERY MONTH, 8 P.M. BOOTS, 10242 106 ST. Cross-dressers, transsexuals, friends, and supporters meet. Info: 780-387-3343 or groups.yahoo.com/group/edmonton.illusions

SATURDAY

NORTHERN TITANS GLBT BOWLING LEAGUE 7 P.M. GATEWAY LANES & RECREATION CENTRE, #100, 3416 GATEWAY BLVD. \$15 per person. Info: bowling@teamedmonton.ca

SINGLE LESBIANS OVER 40 Women's social group, monthly gatherings for conversation over tea and coffee. Info: singlewomen40plus@hotmail.com

YOUTH UNDERSTANDING YOUTH 7-9 P.M. PRIDE CENTRE, 9540 111 AVE. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, straight, and questioning youth (up to 25) gather to have fun and learn in a safe, supportive environment. Info: yuy@shaw.ca

SUNDAY

ARCTIC FRONT RUNNERS 10 A.M. Runners of all levels of ability welcome. Runs are typically 6-8 Km, usually 44-60 minutes. Coffee afterwords. Info on venues and other runs during the week www.teamedmonton.ca, or 780-436-7892

BALLROOM DANCING 7:30-8:30 P.M. All gender combinations welcome. Salsa, rumba, waltz, jive. Info: 780-469-3281 or ballroom@teamedmonton.ca

EDMONTON PRIME TIMES (EPT) 2ND SUN MOST MONTHS, 2:30 P.M. UNITARIAN CHURCH OF EDMONTON, 10804 119 ST. Older gay men and admirers meet for a social period, short business meeting, followed by guest speaker, discussion panel, or potluck supper. Special interest groups

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meet for other activities throughout the month. EPT is affiliated with Prime Times World Wide. Info: edmontontp@yahoo.ca or www.primetimesworldwide.org/edmonton

HATHA YOGA 2-3:30 P.M. LION'S BREATH YOGA. Introductory level class, free. No previous experience required. Bring yoga mat or towel and water. Info: yoga@teamedmonton.ca

LAMBDA CHRISTIAN CHURCH 7 P.M. GARNEAU UNITED CHURCH, 11448 84 AVE. Lambda provides a safe and healing space for Edmonton's gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and heterosexual Christians. All denominations and faiths welcome. Info: 780-887-8611 or lambdaschurch@shaw.ca

MEN TALKING WITH PRIDE 7 P.M. PRIDE CENTRE 9540 111 AVE. Men's social and discussion group, facilitated by Rob Wells. Info: robwells70@hotmail.com or 780-488-3234

SOUL OUTING 3RD SUN EVERY MONTH, 7 P.M. ROBERTSON-WESLEY UNITED CHURCH, 10209 123 ST. LGBT-focused alternative worship. Info: 780-482-1581 or email jvarensoc@tworoc.org

SOUTHWESTER STEINHAUER UNITED CHURCH 10 A.M. 10740 19 AVE. Welcomes all sexual orientations for a variety of activities. Info: 780-897-4974

SPIRITUAL LIVING CENTRE Learn about metaphysics through science and mind classes. Info: www.spiritual-livingcentre.com or 989-3752

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH 10 A.M. 11526 76 AVE. All orientations welcome for Sunday service. Info: 780-436-1555 or www.afirmmited.ca

TRANS EDUCATION & SUPPORT GROUP 1ST & 3RD SUN EVERY MONTH, 7 P.M. PRIDE CENTRE, 9540 111 AVE. Provides support and education for all transsexual, transgendered, intersexed, two-spirited, and questioning individuals. Info: www.allbetrans.org or 780-488-3234

WOMONSPACE BOARD MEETING 1ST SUN EVERY MONTH, 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. PRIDE CENTRE, 9540 111 AVE. Visit www.womonspace.ca

MONDAY

HIV SUPPORT GROUP 2ND MON EVERY MONTH, 7-9 P.M. PRIDE CENTRE, 9540 111 AVE. Info: Richard, 780-488-3234 or richard@pridecentreofedmonton.org

TUESDAY

FREEDOM METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF EDMONTON 7:15 P.M. 10086 MACDONALD DR. A church for all people. Info: 780-429-2321

LGBT SENIORS DROP IN 1:30-3:30 P.M. PRIDE CENTRE, 9540 111 AVE. Social meeting for seniors of all genders. Info: 780-488-3234

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB HAITI POOL, 11762 106 ST. Recreational and competitive swimming and coaching. Beginners encouraged to participate. Practices every TUE (8-9 p.m.) and THU (7:30-8:30 p.m.), followed by social meeting. Info: swimming@teamedmonton.ca

OUTREACH 5 P.M. HERITAGE ROOM, ATHABASCA HALL, U OF A CAMPUS U of A Based group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and straight-but-friendly students, staff, and faculty. Open to the community outside the U of A. Info: outreach.pixels@uofa.ca or outreach@ualberta.ca

TRANS SUPPORT GROUP 2ND TUE EVERY MONTH, 7:30-9:30 P.M. GARNEAU UNITED CHURCH MEETING ROOM, 11448 84 AVE. Education and support group for trans-identified and questioning people. Info: 780-718-1412 or troualliance@shaw.ca

TITIO ALLIANCE 2ND TUE EVERY MONTH, 7:30 P.M. PRIDE CENTRE, 9540 111 AVE. Support meeting for transgender, transsexual, intersex, and questioning individuals. Providing education, advocacy and support for men, women, and youth.

WEDNESDAY

EDMONTON RAINBOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION 2ND WED EVERY MONTH Casual networking with the GLBT business community. Locations listed on www.edmontonrba.org

FREE TO BE RECREATIONAL VOLLEYBALL 8-10 P.M. 101 KINGSWAY AVE. \$50 per season. Info: revolleyball@teamedmonton.ca

OPEN DOOR CLUB 5 P.M. GRANT MACLEAN COLLEGE, CITY CENTRE CAMPUS, RM 6-277 Social group for GLBTQ students, faculty, and friends at GMC.

PLFAG EDMONTON 1ST WED. EVERY MONTH, 7 P.M. PRIDE CENTRE, 9540 111 AVE. Support meeting for parents, families, and friends of GLBTQ individuals. Info: Ruby at 780-436-1998 or edmonton@plfaganad.ca

YOUNG, MEN, OURS AND US (YMOU) 1ST AND 3RD WED EVERY MONTH Support group for GLBT parents, partners, and friends. Info: 780-426-6311 or 780-475-5434



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“WE ALL HAVE OUR OWN VALUES WE PLACE ON A CRUTCH OR A TONGUE OR A MELTING WATCH. IT'S THE SAME WITH MY SHOW OR WITH THE ALBUM.”

MUSIC PREVIEW • GOOD OL' SHOCK ROCK • BY KEITH HARMAN | 641 words

The Alice Cooper Rorschach Test

HIS 24TH STUDIO ALBUM IS A CONCEPT PIECE ABOUT A HOMICIDAL MANIAC WHO THINKS HE'S A SPIDER... OR IS IT?

ALICE COOPER

w/ Econoline Crush, Sept. 27 (8pm), Jubilee Auditorium. Tickets: \$59.50, available through Ticketmaster (451-8000/ticketmaster.ca)

“To me, this is really one of [my] best-written albums, as far as melding together and making the story work,” says original shock rocker Alice Cooper regarding his latest effort, the cryptic, eerie *Along Came a Spider*. His 24th studio album tells the tale of Spider, a serial killer, and the strange modus operandi behind his gore-ific art.

“It’s an interesting story about a serial killer that definitely has flaws,” Cooper says. “Even though he thinks he’s infallible, he’s totally fallible. When you think of Hannibal Lecter, he’s perfect. He’s a serial killer, a psychologist [and] meticulous planner. This guy thinks he’s that – but the more the album goes on, the more you find all these flaws in his personality. He has a romantic side that will get him in trouble. He eventually falls in love with one of his victims and can’t kill her... one of his downfalls. He also has a religious side. In the middle of the album, he has an epiphany: ‘What if I’m wrong?’ That’s a great, complex thing to have happen to a serial killer.”

Easily Cooper’s best work in almost two decades, *Along Came a Spider* pulls from the tragic conceptualism of 1975’s *Welcome to My Nightmare* yet boasts enough balls to almost reach the metallic tinge of 1987’s *Raise Your Fist and Yell*.

Naturally though, when deal-

ing with The Coop, nothing is as it seems.

While the 11-track opus lends itself to the belief that all is real, the album’s unnerving “Epilogue” forces listeners to rethink everything they’ve just heard. Did it happen? Is Spider simply crazy? Was it all just another of Stephen’s nightmares? Cooper wryly declines clarification.

“He’s got everybody on the run; he’s created this spider and wraps his victims in silk – very clever. He takes one leg and the police finally realize: ‘Eight legs and silk? This guy thinks he’s a spider or at least becoming that.’ But then you realize it’s written in a diary form.

“Just when you think you’ve got it all put away, he says, ‘Well, we’ve been in this cell for 28 years. We couldn’t have done that.’ All of those murders only happened in his mind and showed up in the diary... or there could be another killer.”

Still, *Along Came a Spider* took a lot of work to come together. Cooper discarded several approaches to telling the story before settling on the diary concept.

And while he was initially keen to create a radio serial, the idea was nixed when he realized both the limitations of the form, and the shortage of listeners in this day and age who know what the hell a radio soap opera even is.

“It would have been great as a radio drama,” Cooper says. “When I first thought about it, I thought it would be great to have Billy Bob Thornton and Michael Douglas – my friends – to play the parts of the psychiatrist, the cop, or the insane asylum orderly. I think everybody would’ve loved to do that, but I got to the point where I realized if I explain it too much or explain what’ll happen, if I



Teach Us, Coop | We need to know all about proper eyeliner application. PHOTO SUPPLIED

don’t give the audience a chance to use their imagination, it won’t work.

“Great art forces the audience to use their imagination. When I see a Salvador Dali painting, I know what I

see but you’d say, ‘No, he’s not saying that. He’s saying this.’ We all have our own values we place on a crutch or a tongue or a melting watch. It’s the same with my show or with the

album. When you [experience] it, there are so many images going on, you create your own story. [Alice Cooper] is a Rorschach test... it’s all up to you.”



Metalhead Royalty | Baroness rides into to town on a bison... sorry, with Bison Sept. 29. PHOTO SUPPLIED

HOT TICKETS • MUST-SEE SHOWS

WHITE HOT
Matt White
Velvet Underground • Oct. 1
\$12 | Ticketmaster

Matt White is from the Big Apple and he’s making it big time. When he’s not writing songs, recording albums, or shooting videos for his new material – most recently for his single “Love” – he’s opening for legends like B.B. King and touring with the likes of Sheryl Crow. Oh yeah, he also just sold one of his tunes to McDonald’s for a commercial and will kick off his acting career with a spot in the ad. It’s nice to see a young musician who values artistic integrity above fame and fortune. Matt, we are blessed by your sound.

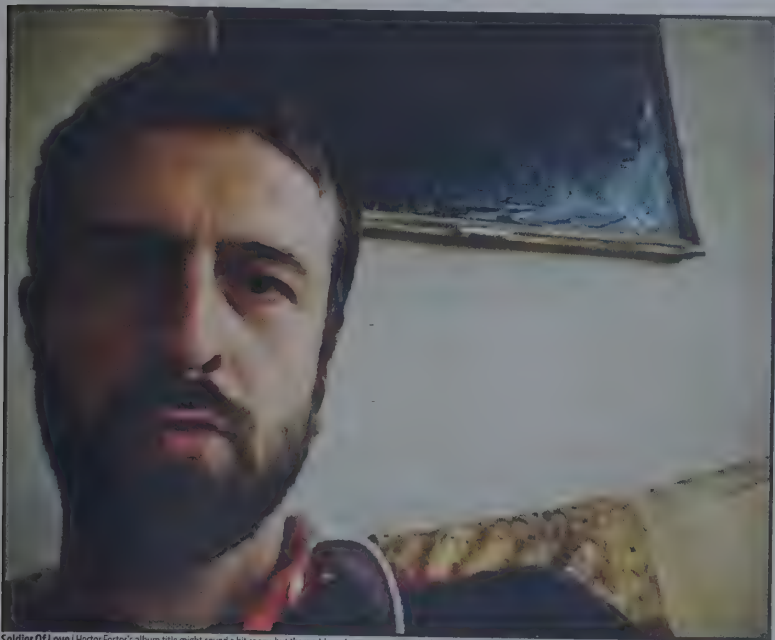
ROYAL BUFFALO
Baroness
Starlite Room • Sept. 29
\$17 | Ticketmaster

The origin of this band’s name remains shrouded in mystery, locked behind the lips of these four metalheads from Georgia. We know the best way to start a rumour is to keep a secret, so here are three possibilities to pass along the grapevine. The Baroness is: (1) John Baizley’s muse. A temptress from the French Quarter in New Orleans. (2) Summer Welch’s stage name for his drag show side project. (3) The goldfish that lived in the back of Peter Adam’s Grade Two classroom.

SOCIABLE
Sally’s Krackers
Pawn Shop • Sept. 27
\$10 | At the door

They claim to be the music makers, and if you like young bands with one foot in the past then you’ll eat up the music this quartet is making. They formed eight years ago with a policy of “original music only” – a decision that may have been fueled by the staff and student body of Austin O’Brien High School who cheered them through five Battle of the Bands victories. Now they’re older, out of school, and have just released their first album with 15 tracks spanning four genres. Ahhh, how they’ve grown up.

This W.A.R. Took Plenty Of Planning



Soldier Of Love | Hector Fector's album title might sound a bit sappy, but the world needs more romantics: don't ya think? PHOTO SUPPLIED

GREG AMUNDSON, A.K.A. HECTOR FECTOR, GETS READY TO RELEASE HIS ALBUM TO THE HOUNDS — FINALLY

HECTOR FECTOR
w/ Daniel Mair, Sept. 26 (9pm), The ARTery (9525 Jasper Ave.)

Greg Amundson is tall — intimidatingly so. However, as we chat about Hector Fector's indie rock debut, *We Are Romantic*, it becomes increasingly clear that he is far more nervous about my tape recorder sitting in the middle of the table than I am about his height.

We Are Romantic (W.A.R.) is an album that has been waiting to be

sideration with which he composed the record in the first place. He waited for Raymond Biesinger, the artist he wanted to create the album's artwork. He waited for the mastering. Then he waited to make sure it felt right.

"At the end of the summer of 2007 it all finished up," Amundson says. "And then I sat on it for a while. Honestly, I was feeling kind of tired. It was a really long process — a lot of work and a lot of time spent on it so I wanted to sit on it to make sure I was up to really going for it." In that context, waiting a few extra seconds for his answers seems perfectly reasonable.

With the help of some friends and

people do that. That was my worst thing in school, writing papers — so painful. I'm good with poems. I have a way of getting what I want to say briefly, because I'm not good at elaborating and detail.

"The songwriting itself, like crafting songs, is probably my favourite thing in the whole world. I'm kind of an obsessive craftsman and it's just something that brings me a lot of happiness. I mean, it's kind of frustrating too sometimes, but it's just a real passion."

So what does all the craftsmanship, the careful consideration, and the waiting add up to? Amundson takes a long pause, crinkles his brow and looks around, as if searching for

"I DIDN'T GO HANG-GLIDING WITH A FRIEND BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO RISK DYING BEFORE I FINISHED THIS ALBUM," AMUNDSON SAYS.
"IT WAS SUCH A GOAL TO GET IT DONE."

released from Amundson's mind, mouth, and fingertips for years — or at least since the summer of 2006, when the recording process started. And that's not counting the time it took to write the songs or to live through the experiences that inspired them.

"I didn't go hang-gliding with a friend because I didn't want to risk dying before I finished this album," Amundson says. "It was such a goal to get it done." With so many years of work behind W.A.R., it only makes sense that he gives every answer to my questions the same level of con-

sideration with which he composed the record in the first place. He waited for Raymond Biesinger, the artist he wanted to create the album's artwork. He waited for the mastering. Then he waited to make sure it felt right.

"What I'll do is just write and write and a lot of it's shit," Amundson says. "I'll write and edit, write and edit, 'til I have a song that feels cohesive lyrically. I tend to do best with songs, 'cause writing 500 words or 1,000 words, I don't know how

the answer is in the air around him.

"I would say that it is desperately trying to be... artful," he says finally. "Just really trying to make music that is about the art, and the craft of songwriting and the music itself. I think people say 'artist' and some people kind of smirk at that word, but it really is 'creative' that I try to follow, and I know it's the same with the people I work with. They are really interested in making quality, striving for originality and doing something that's interesting and adventurous."

Good answer

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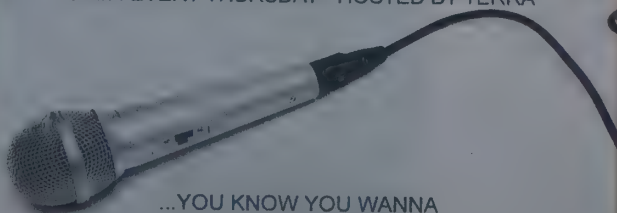
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KARAOKE

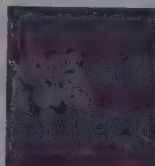
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CD REVIEWS



HEXES AND OHS
Bedroom Madness
(Noise Factory)
★★★★☆

Montreal's Hexes and Ohs are my wife's new favourite band. It's easy to hear why. The world's cutest "longtime couple" (that's how they're described on Wikipedia)

have put some of the warmest, sweetest synth-pop songs in the genre's existence. Like Postal Service, Magnetic Fields, and Lali Puna, Hexes and Ohs take the sad-songs-wrapped-in-happy-sounds approach to music. It's great to hear a band playing the indie-disco game that can do more than find one groove or one sound and ride it for six minutes. A lot of the tracks have that loping bass that Joy Division/New Order made so popular — plus banjo, which is not exactly common in synth-pop but works wonderfully on "Little Bird" all the same.

They were also here for two shows a couple weeks ago. They're even better live than on CD — that's when you see it wasn't all studio magic. But you slept. Or at least you were somewhere else on Friday, when only about 20 people showed up to see them at Riverdale.

Don't worry. They'll be back soon — that is, unless some of their songs get played on a TV show or they get too busy and leave everyone here thinking, "Oh man, I sure wish Hexes and Ohs would come here."

PROSPER PRODANIUK

THE STREETS

Everything Is Borrowed
(679)



★★★★☆

While The Streets started out largely as a showcase for Mike Skinner's charming, everyman brand of braggadocio (typical taunt: "I'm 45th-generation Roman"), he's since become obsessed with authenticity, particularly in the face of fame, and making music that's honest above all else. His fourth album, *Everything Is Borrowed*, is his most unabashed and successful step in that quest yet. Opening title track makes Skinner's argument in its most eloquent form. Over a bubbling, triumphant horn line, he excitedly rattles off a series of mundane things that suddenly seem rife with possibility under the right light. The rest of the album takes a string of similarly trite life lessons — take care of your family, don't commit suicide — and re-energizes them one by one. Sometimes Skinner's earnestness can be a bit grating, but as long as there's one great party beat ("The Sherry End") in the mix, nobody can fault him for giving these diary confessionalists the distribution they deserve.

MICHAEL HINGSTON

RA RA RIOT

The Rhumb Line
(Universal)



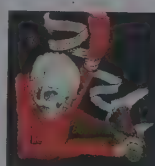
★★★★☆

The full-length debut from upstate New York's Ra Ra Riot is understandably overdue. First their lead singer quit, and then drummer John Pike accidentally drowned in June 2007 — so we should probably cut them some slack for only releasing *The Rhumb Line* several months later than expected. The product is a sweeping, somewhat orchestral pop album that's consistently lovely and engaging, though what's most striking is how the band takes its obvious influences and subverts them. There's a full-time cellist and violinist on hand amidst the soaring melodies and crashing drums, but the songs don't automatically invoke the Arcade Fire. And aside from "St. Peter's Day Festival," Wes Miles' acrobatic vocals manage to carve out territory from the jauntiness of fellow upper-crust New Yorkers Vampire Weekend. The best song on the album is the massive, spiralling cover of Kate Nash's "Suspended in Gaffa," which makes me want to get better acquainted with Nash herself.

MICHAEL HINGSTON

OKKERVIL RIVER

The Stand-Ins
(Jagjaguwar)



★★★★☆

The Stand-Ins is a companion piece to Okkervil River's much-ballyhooed 2007 disc *The Stage Names*, and it shares many of its thematic obsessions: minor celebrities, the emptiness of the rock-star lifestyle, and the lies that musicians tell in their personal lives as well as their music. Will Sheff's lyrics display a phenomenal level of craftsmanship: he begins "Pop Lie" with this labyrinthine sentence: "Sweetly sung and succinctly stated, / Words and music he calculated / To make you sing along / With your stereo on / As you stand in your shorts on the lawn" — and then he carries the same busy rhyme scheme through three more verses. But for all their artistry, few of these songs reach an emotional climax — you get the feeling that Sheff gets more caught up in the structure of his songs than their meaning, chasing after rhymes like a dog chasing its own tail. The most notable exception is "Blue Tulip," a haunting song from the perspective of a lovestruck rock groupie determined to make her idol "mean the words you sigh."

PAUL MATWYCHUK

film

EDMONTON
INTERNATIONAL

festival

MIRIE LONG Besieges Us With Movies
BRUCE MCDONALD Attacks Us With Zombies
ANVIL Assaults Us With Rock 'N' Roll



SEE

Anvil! The Story Of Anvil rocks EIFF at Edmonton City Centre.

Long's Journey Into Filmmaking



From Calculators To Projectors | Kerrie Long went from being an accountant at a television station to the producer of the Edmonton Film Festival. PHOTO BY IAN JACKSON

ON THE EVE OF THE 22ND EDMONTON FILM FEST, SEE LOOKS AT THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ITS ANTSY PRODUCER, KERRIE LONG

Kerrie Long's restless energy gives her an elfin quality as she fidgets from side to side on a couch at a Whyte Avenue café, repeatedly tucking her red hair behind her small ears. She's keyed up for the Edmonton International Film Festival, her fifth as producer, and she's going to need all that frantic energy for the nine-day event.

The 47-year-old's enthusiasm for the festival is eclipsed only by her passion for Edmonton. The self-taught filmmaker describes the city as a classic Wild West land of opportunity. "The potential is huge here," she says, gushing with positivity. "It's like being in Dawson City during the Gold Rush."

Of course, there are always naysayers in any city or organization, and certainly Long has encountered them as well.

When she first started working for the film festival, then called Local Heroes, it was near bankruptcy. "Along comes Kerrie Long, bull in a china shop," she says, "and realizes that this festival has the potential to reach out to a much larger community in Edmonton, and for sure, that shook some feathers."

As a practiced promoter, of course, she's carefully vague in her descriptions, and tactfully implicates no one. "I just felt that it was an important enough event that more people should experience," she says. "And some people didn't like that. Some people *still* don't like that."

She's proud of her efforts to grow the festival, boasting that when she took the job in 2004, the festival received only around 100 film submissions, compared to the 300 it receives now.

And Long has grown along with the festival, says Shelley Switzer, artistic producer of the Edmonton Street

encountered in either festival.

With self-deprecating humour, Long tries to dismiss her own personal story. "I'm always interested to know, why would anyone want to talk to me?" she asks. "Isn't it boring?"

Well, hardly. When Long was nine years old, her mother took off on a motorcycle with a friend, leaving behind Long and her two younger brothers.

"There was a note on the table saying, 'I'll be back on Thursday.' Thursday never came," she says. Her father was jailed shortly after, and Long didn't see either of them

inseminate cows, and found the creative side of farming.

"I was going to take over my dad's dairy farm, end of story," she says, describing herself as the typical know-it-all teenager. Although she moved off the farm to Edmonton after graduating from high school early, she always thought of herself as a dairy farmer. "I went back to help my dad one weekend and he had sold all the cows. He said to me, 'I don't want this life for you.' . . . I was bawling. It was my world. And it changed just like that." She snaps her fingers.

After that, she returned to Edmon-

thought she could raise a couple kids instead of raising cows. She had two daughters with McLellan before the marriage broke up.

Back in Edmonton with two young children, Long took a job with Access Television as an accountant. She became bored quickly, and began snooping into the creative side of the business. She took her coffee breaks in the studio so that she could watch shows being filmed, and even took days off to go on location shoots. Eventually, she landed a writing job and spent the next year soaking up every aspect of filming on the job. The station had just been sold to CHUM, and she used the informal transition time to wiggle into different areas of the television business.

After volunteering for the award-winning local advertising production company Frame 30 while working in television, she left CHUM and landed a regular gig with them. When the film festival job came up, she took one of her characteristic longshot gambles, and it paid off. Five years later, she's still passionately engaged in the festival. But she has other big dreams for herself.

"I'm going to write a book," she says with confidence.

What will it be about?

"I'm not sure yet. Ever since I was little I've had this vision of myself in my fifties doing a book tour."

KERRIE LONG DESCRIBES EDMONTON AS A CLASSIC WILD WEST LAND OF OPPORTUNITY. "THE POTENTIAL IS HUGE HERE," SHE SAYS, GUSHING WITH POSITIVITY. "IT'S LIKE BEING IN DAWSON CITY DURING THE GOLD RUSH."

Performers Festival. She remembers just after Long took the film festival job, newly elected mayor Stephen Mandel called a round-table meeting of the Edmonton artistic community. That was the first time she met Long, and she remembers her being uncharacteristically quiet. Only later, when the two of them met, did Switzer realize how much energy Long possessed. When the two meet now, they bounce ideas off each other and hash out whatever hiccups they've

for years. She and her siblings ended up in foster care at a dairy farm in Vegreville with Jim and Helen Long, whose name she later adopted.

It was at the dairy farm that Long acquired her work ethic. She milked the cows every morning, and remembers smelling like cows all day at school. But she had a talent for working with bovines, she says, describing how she'd bop along to her Walkman as she completed her chores. At 17, she was certified to

ton, and at 21 years old, married a carpenter named Don McLellan. They moved to Fort Smith in the Northwest Territories. But Long had a hard time finding friends in the remote First Nations community. "I was a pretty white girl in an aboriginal community," she says, "and it didn't sit well with a lot of people."

The marriage didn't last, and looking back she says she can't understand why she wanted to get married so young, and jokes that maybe she

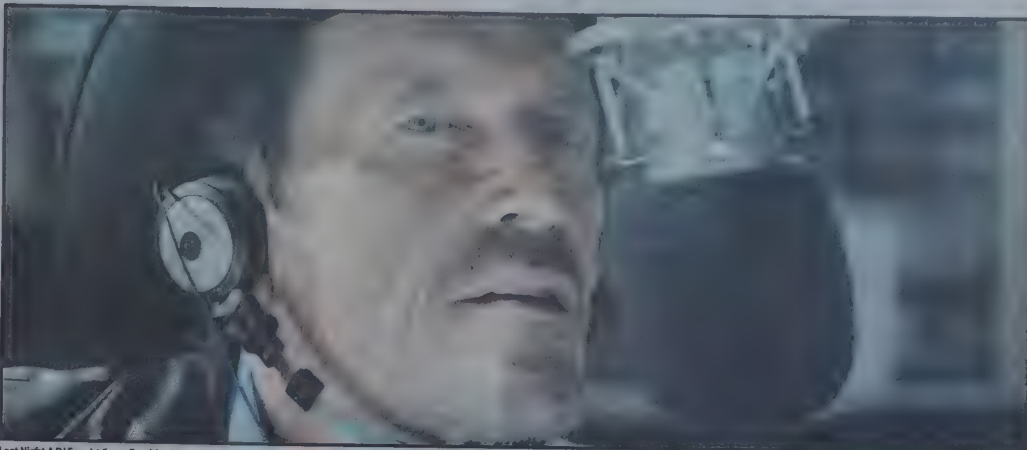
EIFF PREVIEW • GALA OPENER • BY SCOTT LINGLEY | 187 words

Will Pontypool Change Everything?

BRUCE McDONALD'S QUASI-ZOMBIE THRILLER BREAKS NEW GROUND TECHNICALLY, FINANCIALLY, AND ARTISTICALLY

PONTYPOOL

Directed by Bruce McDonald. Starring Stephen McHattie, Lisa Houle, Georgina Reilly. City Centre 9 (Eaton Centre). Fri, Sept 26 (7pm).



Last Night A DJ Fought Some Zombies | Stephen McHattie rules the airwaves in *Pontypool*... but is anyone still alive to hear him? PHOTO SUPPLIED

Inside the fishbowl of a radio station in Pontypool, Ont., a gruff former shock-jock, his producer, and his technical assistant are trapped by a mysterious plague that seems to have driven the local populace insane. Eyewitness accounts delivered over the phone are all they have to help them comprehend the apocalypse befalling the world outside the station walls as demented mobs spouting gibberish attack people and buildings, tearing everything in their sight to pieces. Worse yet, they're closing in on the radio station.

But despite how it sounds, filmmaker Bruce McDonald insists his new shoestring masterpiece *Pontypool* is not a zombie film.

"I see it as more of a screwball comedy where you have the mismatched couple that are thrown together in this situation and they spar a little bit, and they're both have their dignity to protect, but then things start to heat up and they have to join forces and save the world," he says from his Toronto office, where he's recovering from the film's breakneck production schedule. "I see it as more of a dark romance with a small dash of zombie."

Though McDonald — the man behind Canuck cult favourites like *Roadkill* and *Hard Core Logo* — has been working on an adaptation of the 1998 novel *Pontypool Changes*

Everything with author Tony Burgess since the book was published, the director says the present film, which just wrapped shooting in the summer, might have set a land-speed record for how fast the production came together. McDonald and Burgess were actually in the process of writing a script for a radio play for CBC when fate intervened.

"Last February I was at the Horse-shoe Tavern on Queen St. shooting this doc," McDonald says, "and I stepped out on to the street for a smoke and a beer and I ran into this guy I know who's in the music biz. So I start telling him about this crazy little thing that we're writing and he asked me if I thought it could be a movie and I said, 'Yeah I suppose it could — why, do you have any money?' And he said, 'No, but I think I could get some for you.' And from that little meeting to shooting was very quick. Somehow he and his gang raised some money pri-

vately and we were shooting within two months. It's the fastest zero-to-60 I've ever hit in making any production."

Working without government funding (the sine qua non of most Canadian film and television productions) called for a few austerity measures. *Pontypool* was shot over 15 days in one location with a starring cast of four (plus some scary extras bursting through the windows in the final act), and the film is the first to be shot with the Red One Camera, a new high-definition digital video camera that takes 35mm lenses and costs a fraction of most professional digital cameras.

McDonald says already having a specific cast in mind made the tight production schedule that much easier to manage. "As we were writing it, the first person I thought of was Stephen McHattie — actually, all four of them came up quite quickly. We didn't have casting sessions, we didn't have

auditions, I said 'I've worked with all these people before,' and we cast them in an afternoon. There was no casting call. That was a treat, when you've worked with certain people and you have an instinct about them. For example, Steve McHattie [recently seen in *300* and *A History of Violence*] is one of the best actors in the country, and very seldom is he a leading man. So it was very fun to have Steve play the leading role."

So far, the film has only screened at the Toronto International Film Festival, but McDonald says the response has been overwhelmingly positive — "If it's good enough for Sarah Polley, it's good enough for me," he quips — and if *Pontypool* wins over a big enough audience, he and Burgess have plans to continue the non-zombie saga.

"This one that we'll present in Edmonton is, in a way, the first of a trilogy of films, and the most intimate. The question of the first film is

"What is happening?" The answer to that is in the second movie — 'This is happening.' And the third one is about the aftermath. It's a pretty rich book with a lot of juicy stuff in it, so it's taken some time to figure out the idea of a trilogy."

The director admits that, weird as his movie is, it just skims the surface of the weirdness to be found in Burgess' book, which the author has characterized as "autobiography."

"Tony's completely nuts," McDonald says. "If you've ever read the book, the movie's got nothing on the book. Some of it is unfilmable, but that's always an attractive country to go to, because nobody's seen that before. That's part of our mission as independent filmmakers — there's no shortage of heartwarming tales and action movies and superhero movies, that's all well taken care of, so we're the people who are going to take you to a different country."

EIFF PREVIEW • ROCKUMENTARY • BY SCOTT LINGLEY | 102 words

He's Still With The Band



Striking While The Anvil Is... Well, Reasonably Warm | The veteran Canadian rockers Anvil retake their place in the spotlight in *Anvil: The Story of Anvil*. PHOTO SUPPLIED

TRUE METAL FAN SACHA GERVASI HOPES ANVIL WILL GIVE HIS FAVOURITE ROCKERS A NEW LEASE ON LIFE

ANVIL: THE STORY OF ANVIL

Directed by Sacha Gervasi. Featuring Anvil. City Centre 9 (Eaton Centre). Sat, Sept 27 (6:45pm); Fri, Oct 4 (4pm)

Before he was a first-time documentary filmmaker with a festival hut on his hands, before he was a prolific Hollywood screenwriter, Sacha Gervasi may have been the world's biggest fan of Anvil, the Toronto-based heavy metal act that for a brief moment in the '80s stood on par with hair-farmer contemporaries like The Scorpions, Whitesnake, and Bon Jovi. Back in those heady days, the

young Gervasi found himself living out a dream by joining his metal heroes on tour.

"I saw them in London in '82 — they played The Marquee and it was just devastating," Gervasi recalls. "It just went off like a nuclear bomb, they blew the roof off The Marquee and all the big metal bands were there, Maiden and Motörhead. I was so blown away that I rushed backstage and met and they'd never been to London before, so I offered to show them around. So the next day I took them to the Houses of Parliament and the Tate Gallery and Abbey Road, where I lived. And just visiting Westminster Abbey with Anvil was one of the greatest cultural

ANVIL cont'd pg. 26

ANVIL (cont'd from pg. 25)

experiences of my young life. But during that tour-guide period, they asked me if I wanted to come roadie for them the next summer on my summer holidays. I was just a fan, but they always had their fans on the road with them."

Some 25 years later, Gervasi got the idea to reconnect with his old metal idols and discovered that the two founding members, singer guitarist Steve "Lips" Kudlow and drummer Rob Reiner, we're still working menial jobs and struggling to make their dreams of metal stardom come true. He proposed the idea of a documentary about the band to the rockers, now pushing 50, and found them surprisingly receptive.

"It was an astonishing experience," says Gervasi, whose film *Anvil! The Story of Anvil* is one of the more buzzed-about entries at this year's Edmonton International Film Festival, "because here were these guys and they were just extraordinarily open because of the relationship that we had dating back from when I was a kid. When I told them I wanted to

make the movie, I really walked them through every aspect of the film and I said, 'Look, guys, people are going to laugh at you — because you're funny. But understand that's just part of the journey.' And hopefully by the end of the movie, if the movie works, it leads to a place where people are really inspired by them. These guys are funny heavy metal guys, but by then end it's like, you know what? They're actually doing it — they're actually living their dreams. How many people do that?"

The first-time filmmaker says he's been overwhelmed by the response to the movie which, through pre-release screenings that have included performances by the band, has become a festival hit, finding fans in metalhead and mainstream constituencies.

"Forget heavy metal," Gervasi says. "I mean, obviously, Ozzy Osbourne saw the film and went nuts for it — but people like Michael Moore, bands like Fall Out Boy, Weezer, Trent Reznor. David Byrne from Talking Heads was at a screening in New York four weeks ago and David

Byrne was headbanging to Anvil. It's the story of the musician's struggle, it's the story of every underdog artist, it's really very little to do with heavy metal, ultimately."

Rife with moments of humiliating hilarity, barely articulate male-bonding and disproportionate attacks of ego, *Anvil! The Story of Anvil* transcends the mockery that its subjects almost seem to invite to uncover the poignancy of the four-decade friendship between Kudlow and Reiner, the heartbreak of toiling fruitlessly at one's art and the sheer determination to roll with the often-cruel punches doled out by the music biz. Gervasi credits the band for letting him get so close with his camera.

"I don't think they really cared. Lips and Rob have been playing music together for 35 years, and they're just like, 'What have we got to lose?' They weren't worried about their image because they don't have an image — no one knows who the fuck they are. So they weren't worried about preserving something because they really had nothing to preserve. And

they weren't worried about my intent because I was completely open with them from day one. I was really honest because I'm their friend and I was going to do an honest, unflinching portrait of what they're life is."

After carving the final cut out of 320 hours of footage collected over two years following the band around Canada, eastern Europe, the U.K., and Japan, Gervasi says he finds the response to the film so far to be entirely overwhelming.

"It far exceeded my ludicrously high expectations. I had hopes for it but there was some magic to it. The moment we turned on the cameras it was obvious that all the intensity and yearning of the last 25 years came into clear focus, and suddenly that whole struggle just presented itself. You can tell, it's a very intense emotional experience. It contains pretty much every human emotion because their lives do."

More gratifying to the director than the critical acclaim is the fact that his movie seems to have ignited a newfound interest in his favourite band in the world, an enthusiasm he

hopes some writer calling him from some weekly rag in Alberta will help share with the film's prospective audience.

"Anything you can do to promote the movie and get those guys' story out is great," he says, "particularly in Canada, where I think they've been overlooked-slash-forgotten for a long time. In fact, I'm hoping that Canadians can take pride in their own music and celebrate the success of a band that's been criminally overlooked. But it's good for Canadians to hear people like Slash and Lars and Lemmy acknowledging how influential this band has been and I just hope that Canada is also able to embrace them and celebrate what they've done and what they are and what they continue to do. Because they are, if nothing else, a fucking amazing live band. They've been doing it 30 years and they're really good at it."

Saturday's screening of Anvil! The Story of Anvil will be followed by a live performance by Anvil at the Century Casino

EIFF 2008 • REVIEWS APLENTY!

...And Now, The Reviews!

NOTE: Screenings for all these films take place downtown at Empire Theatres (City Centre 9).

45 RPM

Mon, Sept 22 (7:15pm)

Identity politics and small-town claustrophobia abound in this rural Manitoba coming-of-age story, although neither makes much of an impact. It's 1960, and Parry and Luke are best friends and restless souls — Parry (Jordan Gavaris) is known throughout town as "the Huck Finn of Goose Lake," which basically means he cuts school to walk through the forest, and Luke (Justine Banskzy) idealizes (and maybe lusts over) everything Parry does. After accidentally picking up a radio signal from a New York rock 'n' roll station, they decide to enter a contest to win plane tickets that would take them away from Goose Lake for good.

Concise as it may sound, there's nothing straightforward or even coherent about writer/director Dave Schultz's story, which includes several tangents that get instantly dropped and forgotten (like the fighter jet that mysteriously crashes in the woods). Michael Madsen and MacKenzie Porter are great as the new-to-town father and daughter, but Gavaris and Banskzy are too frustrating and naive to win our sympathy, let alone our affection. Then there's the confusion about whether Luke is actually a boy or a well-disguised girl — and seeing as how that's the only real point of intrigue, I won't spoil it here. —Michael Hingston

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

ADAM'S APPLES

Wed, Oct 1 (9:15pm)

The little character of this gnomish little fable from Danish writer/director Anders Thomas Jensen is a neo-Nazi skinhead, freshly sprung

from prison, who arrives at a small countryside church to perform a few months of community service as per the terms of his parole. Ivan, the priest in charge (played by Mads Mikkelsen from *Casino Royale*), assigns him the task of caring for the church's lone apple tree. But as Adam slowly becomes aware of Ivan's, shall we say, less than firm grasp on reality (he insists that his several disabled son is perfectly healthy, that his wife didn't deliberately overdose on pills but mistook her medication for yellow M&Ms), he makes it his mission to shatter Ivan's fantasy world and shatter his serene faith in God's love. The film's light comic touch and its mischievous, inscrutable approach toward the subject of faith and the existence of God are intriguing for a while, but Jensen's handling of his characters ultimately becomes too glib and cartoonish — the arrival of a "reformed" Pakistani bankrobber who appears late in the film, speaking in broken Danish and randomly shooting people the moment he gets a gun back in his hand, feels particularly ill-judged.

How do I like these Apples? Not enough to recommend them. —Paul Matwychuk

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Thu, Oct 2 (7:15pm)

A reverent overview of how Cirque du Soleil collaborated with Sir George Martin, the surviving Beatles, and their finicky business apparatus to mount a \$180 million show based on the band's music, *All Together Now* suffers from its own awe at the magnitude of the talents involved. There's a lot of hand-wringing about doing the canonical music justice and a few sequences where the details of the production are fiddled with, but the sense of process for the massive cast of artists and personalities involved is only fleetingly



AUDIENCE OF ONE ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

touched on. What you get instead is a long, possibly redundant argument for the abiding legacy of The Beatles combined with a long commercial for the stagecraft of Cirque du Soleil, and little else above and beyond that. The spectacle is, obviously, spectacular. —Scott Lingley

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

ANVIL! THE STORY OF ANVIL

Sat, Sept 27 (6:45pm)/Fri, Oct 4 (4pm)

There are moments at the beginning of this documentary about unsung Canadian metal heroes Anvil that promise nothing more than a condescending, point-and-laugh portrait

of the band's aging founding members and their sometimes less-than-dignified pursuit of elusive stardom.

But director Sacha Gervasi, who roadied for the band in the '80s before becoming a Hollywood screenwriter, has such an obvious affection and respect for frontman Steve "Lips" Kudlow and drummer Rob Reiner he's able to carve an inspiring film out of all the setbacks and humiliations his camera captures, and celebrate these guys' determination to follow their dreams and the decades-long friendship the band is built on.

That said, there are plenty of Spinal Tap-worthy moments — most notable when

Reiner shows off the product of his passion for painting. But if you're not rooting for Lips and Robbo by the end of this movie, you're a cold, cynical bastard indeed. Reality TV wishes it could be this engaging and true to life. —Scott Lingley

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆

AUDIENCE OF ONE

Wed, Oct 1 (5pm)

Richard Gazowsky, the pastor of Voice of Pentecost Church, has a vision: he wants to make the greatest movie of all time, a sci-fi version of the Biblical story of Joseph (entitled *Gravity: Shadow of Joseph*) that he describes as

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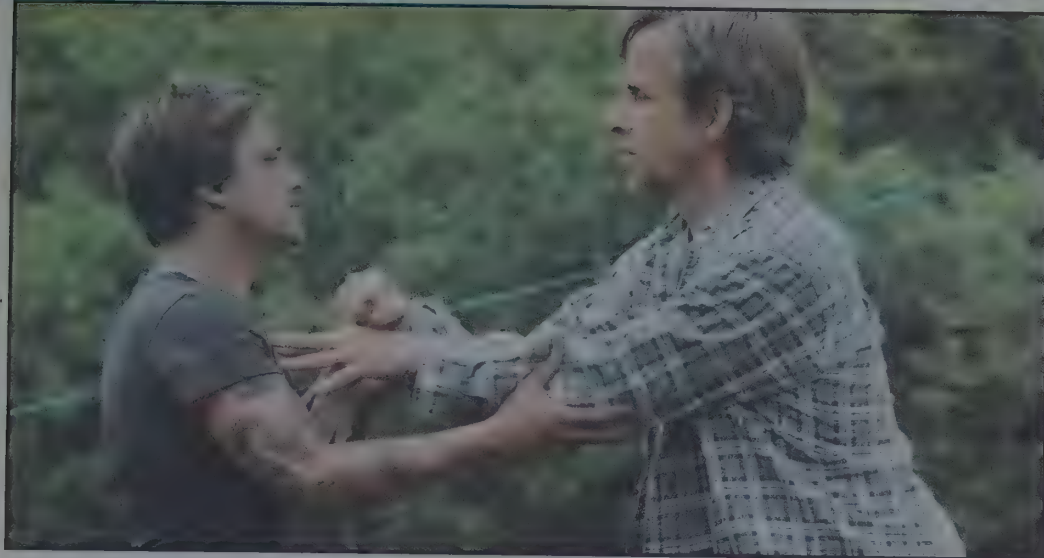
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DOWN TO THE DIRT ★★★★★



"Star Wars meets *The Ten Commandments*." He has zero filmmaking experience and, indeed, never even saw a movie until he was 40, but God spoke to him, he says, which is more than George Lucas or Cecil B. DeMille can say for themselves.

With his wife and daughter heading up the costume and props department and a German bank providing the budget (could this be the same one that gives Uwe Boll all his money?), Gazowsky and his parishioners head off to Italy for a disastrous five-day shoot, followed by an even more unproductive sojourn at a studio back home in San Francisco. And somewhere along the way, Gazowsky stops looking less like an amusingly deluded dreamer and more like an insane menace. Michael Jacobs' documentary will have you shaking your head in dismay, and then picking your jaw off the floor in amaze-

ment as Gazowsky tells his followers about his new eight-part plan to film 47 movies a year, open 27 resorts around the world, and colonize outer space. —Paul Matwychuk
★★★★☆

BABYSITTER WANTED Sat, Sept 28 (9:30pm)

This is a juicy slasher flick with all the trimmings — bloody trimmings. Co-directors Jonas Barnes and Michael Manassen will have you squirming in your seat as Jim Stanton (Bruce Thomas) hacks up body after body to feed his devil-child. I know: feeding the son of Satan might sound easy, but it's messy, tiring work. So you can hardly blame Jim and his pretty country wife, Violet (Kristen Dalton) for craving a night on the town. Naturally, they need someone to watch young Sam for the evening, but babysitting the fruit of

Lucifer's loins can be murder... as naive college student Angie (Sarah Thompson) soon finds out.

If you love gory, predictable storylines full of mediocre acting, and vague allusions to Catholic dogma, this is the flick is for you. Any attempt to read deeply into the storyline will give you a headache faster than diving into the shallow end of a pool, so don't bother. I recommend simply taking *Babysitter Wanted* for what it is: an orgy for the darker senses that any fear junkie will love. —Andrew Paul
★★★★☆

BIG STORY IN A SMALL CITY

Sat, Sept 27 (2:15pm)

Imagine for a moment that your father has just died. He's in his casket for a public viewing in your home, looking serene and peaceful. Then a friend of the family pulls you aside

and points out that the man in the coffin isn't your father at all, but an impostor.

That's the set-up for Gor Kirakosian's comic tale of love, respect, family ties, and Murphy's Law, in which the Janoyan family tracks down the owners of the deceased doppelgänger in hopes of finding their own father, only to find out that the stranger in their house is actually the late head of the Armenian mafia. Kirakosian's quick-witted script recalls style of the late Blake Edwards. Indeed, Peter Sellers would have fit right into this light-hearted comedy — which apparently was based on a true incident. *Big Story in a Small City* will leave you with a smile on your face and a renewed appreciation for North American funeral traditions. —Andrew Paul
★★★★☆

BONJOUR!!! JE M'APPELLE MAXIME RENARD

Sat, Sept 27 (12:15pm)

This one's a sort of crazed, whimsical francophone reimagining of *Jackass*. But I mean that in the best possible way. Directed by and starring Niels Dubost and Sevy Weber, the film examines the recent obsession with reality TV and the bizarre behaviour it inspires through a hilarious fable about a battle between a fame-obsessed husband and his at least half-sensible spouse. His quest for the perfect video stunt gradually becomes an epic and all-consuming passion that nearly brings more than physical harm crashing down on the couple.

Dubost steals the show with his characterization of the dotty husband, and gives the already strong writing the perfect sardonic boost. This one's so obscure it's not even listed in the IMDb, but it might well be one of the most quirky, fun, and thoughtful films we'll see in Edmonton all year. —Elliot Kerr
★★★★☆

THE CAKE EATERS

Sat, Sept 27 (7:15pm)/Sun, Sept 28 (noon)

The most exciting bits of movies are when people are yelling, crying, and having sex. But any good story needs a beginning, no matter

how intense the middle, or poignant the end happens to be. The groundwork must be laid so that the audience cares about what the characters care about.

The Cake Eaters, the directorial debut of actress Mary Stuart Masterson, drops you in right in the middle. So when wannabe rock star Guy Kimbrough returns home upon hearing the news of his mother's passing and moves right past her gravestone down to the local beauty shop to rekindle a relationship with his high school sweetheart, I don't care. When it turns out the Kimbrough family patriarch has been cheating on his wife for years, I don't care. The film never gives you a chance to get to know these people and invest your heart, however temporarily, with their rise and fall.

Which is disappointing, seeing as the connection between Georgia (Kristen Stewart), a young woman with a crippling genetic illness, and Beagle (Aaron Stanford), an awkward twentysomething who gets stuck caring for his dying mother, is dynamic and touching and could have carried the movie.

—Kathleen Bell

★★★★☆

DAKOTA SKYE

Fri, Oct 3 (6:45pm)/Sat, Oct 4 (12:15pm)

Dakota Skye could make you afraid to tell another lie for as long as you live. Even a little one. The title character is a surly teenager with an uncanny superpower — she can detect lies — and as the film unfolds, we see how her strange ability alters her perception of the ordinary world, and ultimately changes her ideas about what is the truth. To take the superhero genre and soak it in zippy teen angst as a way of tackling such an impossible philosophical question is a clever tactic, and the writing offers a lot of fun along the way.

Eileen April Boylan gives a nuanced performance as Dakota, and director John Humber creates an alternately claustrophobic and wide-open visual world for her to inhabit, eerily shadowing Dakota's mental world with the physical one. Both of them will be on hand at the TIFF screening, so try to snag a conversation; someday you can say you knew them before they were famous... and you won't even be lying. —Elliot Kerr
★★★★☆

DEAR ZACHARY: A LETTER TO A SON ABOUT HIS FATHER

Sun, Sept 28 (7:15pm)/Thu, Oct 2 (4pm)

Kurt Kuenne's documentary is addressed to Zachary, the son of the filmmaker's friend Andrew Bagby, who was murdered without ever meeting his son. A relentless succession of recorded phone calls, court dates, and official pronouncements from the police creates a frightening chronology, illuminated by interviews with surviving friends and family, and film and video of the murdered man and those close to him. And just when you think you can't get any more upset or anguished, another shock hits.

Never gratuitous or mawkish, *Dear Zachary* arouses great anger at a justice system that failed repeatedly to punish or even contain a murderer and prevent additional crimes. Kuenne contrasts the almost-always smiling and loving victim with the brutality that silenced him and the callous disregard those he left behind had to endure. We learn about Bagby's past and his great potential through



BIG STORY IN A SMALL CITY ★★★★★

THIS SEASON SURRENDER YOURSELF 2008

Edmonton OPERA Explorers' club

Edmonton Opera's Explorers' Club is celebrating its 10th birthday in the 2008/2009 season. Offering young Edmontonians the chance to experience the opera at an affordable rate, and inviting them to become part of the opera community are hallmarks of the club as it looks forward to a 3rd straight sold-out year.

Why spend another night in front of the TV or at the movies when you can get the real-live deal at the opera? The art form's music, emotions, storylines and set all combine into a big ball of spectacle for the entertainment and pleasure of opera-goers. And, although it's more than 400 years old, opera hasn't slowed down with age. Pop culture references opera constantly, from television commercials and programs to Broadway musicals like *Rent* and *Miss Saigon*,

and major motion pictures, including *Philadelphia*, *Moonstruck*, *The Godfather* and *Fatal Attraction*. Pop singer-songwriter Rufus Wainwright has just penned his first opera, *Prima Donna*, premiering in Manchester next summer. Movie moguls like David Cronenberg are currently trying their hands at opera-as-film, and the book-to-film adaptation has spawned the film-to-opera sequel (i.e. *Brokeback Mountain* and *An Inconvenient Truth*), and opera houses around the world have begun recording and streaming live high-definition broadcasts. Additionally, Canadian companies are constantly raising the bar for their own live productions, and Edmonton Opera is no exception. The Edmonton Opera Explorers' Club offers Edmonton's 18-29 year-olds the chance to get involved at a price that can

best be described as ridiculously low.

The Club is officially a decade old this year and will likely celebrate by selling out for the third year in a row. The \$40 membership offers a variety of perks, the highlights of which include:

- one free ticket to any main-stage production in the 2008/2009 season;
 - the opportunity to purchase two "best in house" seats for \$20 to each main-stage production
 - an exclusive reception at intermission, complete with Edmonton-original snacks and a drink or two.
 - discounts at the Citadel Theatre and at Edmonton's premier pizzeria, Funky Pickle.
- "Opera resonates with audiences in ways too numerous to count," says Audience Development Manager Brianna Wells.

"And whether it's the colour, the music, the story or something else entirely that moves you, the Explorers' Club is a fantastic opportunity for the opera-curious – and even opera-cringers. Members can throw outdated opera stereotypes to the wind and plunge into a world of passion, intrigue, and even the occasional cheeky shenanigan!"

The stories are compelling, the music is stirring, and the English translations are projected above the stage, ensuring everyone's evening at the opera is engaging and enjoyable.

Explorers' Club memberships are on sale now through the Edmonton Opera Box Office at (780) 429-1000. For more information, visit www.edmontonopera.com.





THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Edmonton Opera opens its 45th season with the haunting tale of a man doomed to sail the seas for all time. As the sea rages, this cursed sailor scours the globe in search of his only salvation: the love of a woman.

The legend of the Flying Dutchman has circulated throughout the western world for hundreds of years. To seafarers, the Dutchman is a glowing phantom ship, and, normally accompanied by a raging storm, it is usually a sign of doom to most sailors. A 17th century Dutch sea captain, Bernard Fokke, who was famous for making unusually fast trips between Holland and Indonesia, is widely believed to be the man at the heart of the legend. His speedy sailing was so improbably fast that people agreed he must have made a shady deal with the devil.

Dutchman sightings were commonplace in the 19th and 20th centuries; even King George V of England had a run-in with the spectre as a teen. In the last century, scientists have killed the joy of a great ghost story with their theory behind the sea hauntings. Apparently, the Flying Dutchman phenomenon, known in science-talk as "looming", is similar to a mirage. Depending on the way light is refracted on the water, a ship seen on the edge of the horizon will appear to be suspended in mid-air.

Despite the wet-blankety of the science community, the legend of the Flying Dutchman lives on in pop-culture and is referenced in books, music, theatre, as well as in television and film. Jethro Tull, Tori Amos and German dance-metal supergroup Rammstein all reference the Flying Dutchman in their respective recordings. Three episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, as well as an episode of cult cartoon hit *Spongebob Squarepants* allude to the legend. Disney's *The Pirates of the Caribbean* film series is perhaps the most popular of these adaptations. In these versions, the character at the helm of the ghost ship is typically portrayed as a man who has lost his soul in a game of dice with the devil, or a man punished for his conceit as a sailing superstar, or his greed.

Wagner completed his adaptation of the legend, inspired either by a very stormy sea voyage he suffered through or by Heinrich Heine's

satire *The Memoirs of Mister Schnabelewopski*, (say that three times fast), in 1841, depending on which autobiography you read. Wagner was working on several projects at this time and having trouble getting his works produced. Despite his best efforts, Wagner had failed to make it big in Paris, the opera capital of Northern Europe. He had had multiple operas rejected by the opera houses in the city before finally breaking into the scene with *Der fliegende Holländer*, his first critical operatic success.

Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* is remarkable because of the portrait the music paints of the stormy sea, intertwined with stories of redemption and love. At a run-time of about 2½ hours, *Dutchman* doesn't come close to Wagner's ambitious 16 hour-long *Ring Cycle*, (Wagner had always been a composer who liked to go big or go home), but like the operatic behemoth, it does explore universal questions of love and salvation. Wagner's artistic vision pushed beyond traditional boundaries, and Wagner knew it: in an act of total humility, he built a shrine to his own creativity at Bayreuth, which is the site of many opera pilgrimages every year.

Edmonton Opera's production of *The Flying Dutchman* is very different than Wagner's original romantic setting. First presented by the Canadian Opera Company in 1996, this *Dutchman* is rooted in the German Expressionist cinematic movement of the early 20th century. The set is darkly symbolic with disturbingly asymmetrical angles, and the singers appear in chalky, pallid make-up: think *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, except with expansive orchestration. The production promises a nightmarish world where damnation and salvation clash over the crash of the ocean.

The Flying Dutchman was last performed nearly 20 years ago in Edmonton, and returns to the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium October 25, 28, and 30, 2008, at 7:30 pm.



Richard Wagner



DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

Edmonton Opera rings in the New Year with a roll of the drums and a roar of laughter at Gaetano Donizetti's *Daughter of the Regiment*. Marie, *la fille du regiment*, is happy with her life as the adopted 'daughter' of a regiment of soldiers until Tonio hits the scene, and she must choose between the love of her soldier-dads (yes, all of them), and her true love.

This story is inspired by vivandières, or young women that frequently travelled and worked with military detachments in 18th and 19th century European armies. Not surprisingly for a comedy of this era, the story has more plot twists and mistaken identities than a Shakespearean comedy or an episode of *Arrested Development*. In fact, in the original plot it is revealed that Marie was born out of wedlock, but contemporary synopses for the opera usually water down Marie's racy past by making her the daughter of an ill-matched and short-lived marriage.

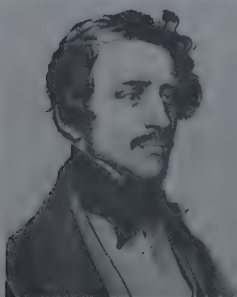
Donizetti was already well known for his *bel canto* comedies when he premiered *La Fille* in 1840, but he had moved to Paris in search of enduring operatic fame – and more relaxed censorship rules. (Not atypically, Donizetti was also keen on other relaxed rules, and his early death from syphilis was no doubt the result of his new freedom and fame). He completed *La Fille du Regiment* while he was revising *Poliuto*, the controversial opera that had been censored by Italian censors. In fact, Donizetti holds the rare distinction of premiering two works simultaneously in two different Paris opera houses. While critics were aghast at the young composer's impudence, the public was delighted by *La Fille*, and the finale "La Salut à la France" later became a patriotic song in France.

While *Daughter of the Regiment* is not commonly listed alongside *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *L'Elisir d'Amore* (The Elixir of Love) as one of Donizetti's greatest works, it has held a very important place in operatic history – especially in the 20th century. It boasts an exceptionally difficult aria in the second act ("Ah! Mes Amis"), wherein Tonio, the tenor who falls in love with Marie, sings to the boys about what a great day it is for rocking out. Singing about your awesome day is nothing unique in opera, but the tricky part comes



at the end, when Tonio, stoked about being in love AND joining the regiment, sings nine high Cs in a row. (If this doesn't impress you, try it at home.) When a young Luciano Pavarotti took on the role opposite Dame Joan Sutherland at Covent Garden in 1966, his vocal prowess was immediately apparent and he rocketed to operatic fame (and the pun-tastic title "King of the High Cs"). Juan Diego Florez's recent performance as Tonio at La Scala so impressed the audience that it broke the opera house's 74-year old embargo on encores.

Today, the opera is performed regularly across the world, and many tenors have mastered the art of the nine high Cs. Edmonton favourite Colin Ainsworth will take up the mantle of Tonio and join an all-Canadian cast for *Daughter of the Regiment* February 7, 10, and 12, 2009 in the Jubilee Auditorium.



Gaetano Donizetti

LA TRAVIATA

She's beautiful. She's brilliant. She's dying. Verdi's famous courtesan, Violetta Valéry, stages an Edmonton Opera comeback to close out the 2008/2009 season in April 2009.

The lovely, tragic leading lady falls for the impetuous Alfredo Germont and leaves the glittering world of Parisian salons to live a quiet life in the country. When Alfredo's father bursts into their sequestered life and demands that she give him up, Violetta must decide how far she is willing to go for love. And the best part of all? She's dying of consumption, (tuberculosis for those "proper medical term" sticklers), the whole time.

The opera's music will be familiar even to opera-newbies, because it has appeared in films ranging from *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* to *The Godfather* and *In the Line of Fire*, and the story has been reincarnated again and again throughout music, literature, theatre, and popular culture in general. The opera makes a cameo in *Pretty Woman* (the opera Julia and Rick attend in the film is actually *La Traviata*), and *Moulin Rouge*, is in many ways a *Traviata*, only with Elton John, Beck and Bono instead of Verdi in the soundtrack.

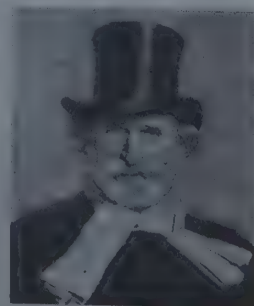
The model for Violetta Valéry was Marguerite Gauthier, the consumptive courtesan from André Dumas, fils' novel, *La Dame aux Camélias*. And Dumas based his character on the real-life courtesan Marie Duplessis, with whom he had an affair until her heart-breaking death at the young age of 23. Verdi knew that Dumas' story had been autobiographical, and after seeing the play in 1853, he was so moved by the work and Duplessis' story that he composed *La Traviata* in a matter of weeks. Verdi's opera helped to make Dumas' story about consumptive love one of the most enduring tales on the subject, but it was by no means the only one written during the 19th century.

The link between consumption and a strangely charged sexuality was disturbingly popular in the 19th century. Before the medical community knew much about the disease, consumptives were believed to have either inherited the mystical condition or invited it with lascivious or wanton behaviour. The consumptive's flushed cheeks, now known as a symptom of respiratory distress, were

seen as a sign of "excess feeling", either emotional or sexual.

And the fainting-on-the-couch that follows the flush? It was made famous by Verdi's Violetta Valéry, who vows to live life to the fullest but can't move from room to room without resting. Both hew and cry have been raised over the story's sympathy for a woman of questionable values, but the years have confirmed that Verdi's work rises above such complaints to examine the larger questions of love, sacrifice, loss and betrayal.

La Traviata will glitter through the Jubilee Auditorium April 25, 28, and 30, 2009.



Giuseppe Verdi

Photo By Ellis Bros Photography *Falstaff*

WE WILL ROCK YOU

The saying "go big or go home" goes beyond the realm of extreme sport! Opera's grandeur and massive scope can be intimidating to opera newbies – it might even turn them into opera-phobes. But, if you note opera's widespread presence in North America, common opera misconceptions begin to dissolve. Even if you've never been to an opera or cannot name one to save your life, you've probably been exposed to it through movies, television, popular music or advertising. And with good reason: opera is about portraying the tragedy, absurdity, and exhilaration of begin human, and heightening that portrayal with costumes, sets, staging and music.

Operas were the movies of the 19th century, and they have a lot in common with today's films: their stories are about survival, passion, intrigue, bravery, betrayal, love, loss... And, for the action-oriented, opera is also rife with duels, swordfights, wars and assassination. Additionally, 19th century librettos,

the opera's version of the screenplay, were based as frequently on contemporary literature as they were on myth or biblical stories. So, much like novels with the "now a major motion picture" tag, books like *Ivanhoe* and *La Dame aux Camélias* could have been re-published with a "now a major opera" tag on them in the 1800's.

With the rise in popularity of opera in recent years, the art form has seen a surge of innovative productions, like Willie Decker's 2005 *La Traviata*, where the opening party smacks of a Marilyn Monroe film. Additionally, songwriters, screenwriters and directors are writing and producing new operas, for both the stage and the big screen. Perhaps Woody Allen, David Cronenberg and Rufus Wainwright's efforts will compel more people to overcome opera-phobia and discover why the art form has endured for more than 400 years. If not, here are some helpful opera facts to convince you instead:

DID YOU KNOW??

#1 Opera is NOT long and boring

Okay, it's true that a night at the opera may run a solid three hours, including intermission. But that's roughly the same as a hockey game and certainly no longer than an installment of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. As for boring, an opera has as many, if not more, plot twists and intrigues than a season of *Mad Men*...

#2 Opera is NOT way too expensive

No one denies that opera is very expensive to produce, which is why most opera companies are not-for-profits, but it is not necessarily expensive to attend. In Edmonton, opera tickets start as low as \$25, or \$20 for Explorers' Club members!

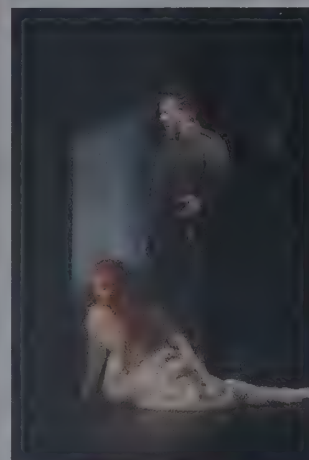
#3 Everybody can understand opera

The days of "faking it" are long gone. Much like your favourite foreign film or karaoke tune, all Edmonton Opera productions have English translations projected above the stage. If you can read this, you can just as easily follow an opera plot.

#4 Lots of cool people attend the opera

Edmonton Opera audiences certainly hail from a wide variety of backgrounds and day-jobs, but they do share one thing in common – they are an enthusiastic bunch. Also, after reading this, you'll be there... and you're cool.

PAST PRODUCTIONS BY EDMONTON OPERA

*HMS Pinafore* Jeff Haslam Photo By Ellis Bros. Photography*Bluebeard's Castle* Susan Marie Pierson, Jason Howard Photo by Ellis Bros. Photography

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FLAME & CITRON ★★★★★



old home movies Kuenne made as an aspiring filmmaker, in which his friend often starred. We also learn about the killer, not just from the testimony of others, but from taped calls that reveal the full force of her twisted personality. Kuenne gives a clear, thorough account of this sad story without ever getting bogged down in details. —Barry Bristman

★★★★☆

DOWN TO THE DIRT

Wed, Oct 1 (6:45pm)

Who would have picked Halifax as the epitome of big city degeneracy? Not me, but novelist, poet, and screenwriter Joel Thomas Hynes makes a convincing case in this angry and merciless depiction of shame, humiliation, and debasement amid the natural beauty and genteel manners of Atlantic Canada. Hynes plays Keith, an alcoholic poet with an arson habit in small-town Newfoundland. A self-destructive mess determined to take everyone down with him, Keith seeks broader canvases in St. John's and Halifax.

Hynes' degradingly naturalistic portrayal of Keith is complemented by the powerful performance of Mylène Savioie as his girlfriend Natasha, who's slightly more self-aware and hopeful of better times. Robert Joy displays quiet dignity as a timid, beaten-down man who finally stands up for himself and his family — Joy's eerie physical resemblance to Hynes makes Keith's willingness to do anything to avoid repeating his father's life all the more believable. Add in a prostitute, a professional sadist, and a bit of animal torture and the gallery of ugly characters is complete. Never have I been so relieved to see that line in the end credits that says no animals were harmed in this production. —Barry Bristman

★★★★☆

FLAME & CITRON

Sat, Oct 4 (2:45pm)

Ole Christian Madsen's Second World War

thriller *Flame & Citron* starts off with a lot of exposition. Between archival footage and a few brutally deadpan murder scenes, the film gives us a deliberately paced account of one faction of the Holger Danske group, one of the main forces opposing the Nazi presence in Denmark. The film's eponymous heroes became well-known resistance fighters: Bent (Thure Lindhart) — dubbed Flame on account of his ginger hair — and his partner Jorgen (Mads Mikkelsen) work under orders to eliminate any Dane who favours the Nazis, eventually departing from their superior officer's wishes to pursue a few German head honchos.

Mikkelsen's Citron is revealed as an anxiety-ridden, sensitive man not quite cut out for the assassin role, one his younger partner relishes with nationalistic pride. Though the fates of Flame and Citron are already written in history (and on Wikipedia), the film's carefully crafted tension builds to a breathtaking dual climax, performed and choreographed with odd, wondrous grace and an unexpected juxtaposition of fates. Both performances end with stunning abruptness, the characters' heroic and eventual legendary status leaving room to debate values of heroism and the definition of "good" men. —Fawnda Mithrush

★★★★☆

GOODBYE BABY

Sat, Oct 4 (2:15pm)

What would happen if you erased Britney Spears from her appalling 2002 coming-of-age movie *Crossroads* and replaced her with a sexy, foul-mouthed teenager who just wants to get out of Jersey and make it big in Manhattan's standup comedy scene? Well, the results might vaguely resemble *Goodbye Baby*, an attempt to set a romantic comedy within the world of struggling stand-up comedians. This film from writer/director Daniel Schechter has modest ambitions — a few laughs, and some charming moments of young love in bloom — but it achieves all of them. Unknown lead Christine Evangelista

turns in a capable, engaging performance that carries the film. Think of *Goodbye Baby* as a slick, low-budget impersonation of Hollywood romance, hold the cheese. Stand-up fans will recognize cameos from a number of notable New York comics, and keep your eyes peeled for a disguised Alan Ruck from *Ferns Bueller's Day Off* in a supporting role. —Elliot Kerr

★★★★☆

THE GREAT MATCH

Sat, Sept 27 (4:30pm)/Mon, Sept 29 (4pm)

When you live in Canada, it's easy to forget that the entire world shuts down every four years to watch the World Cup — we aren't ex-

actly known for our passion for soccer north of the 49th parallel. But the rest of the world takes the sport very seriously indeed, and in *The Great Match*, writer/director Gerardo Olivares has a lot of fun imagining just what lengths people in some far-flung corners of the globe go to in order to watch the game. The film follows three groups of people attempting to watch the 2002 final between Germany and Brazil: a family of Mongolian nomads, a caravan of Tuareg traders in the Sahara Desert, and a group of indigenous tribesmen in the Amazon. But getting your hands on a TV and powering it up in time for the big final is no small matter in any of these places, and gentle, family-friendly

hilarity ensues. Even if you've seen it before — this film was originally released in Europe in 2006 to coincide with (what else) the World Cup — the dramatic cinematography is worth catching on the big screen. If you're looking for a light-hearted way to keep the flame alive until 2010 in South Africa, this film could be just the ticket. —Elliot Kerr

★★★★☆

HEAVY LOAD

Sun, Sept 28 (2:30pm)

Most members of rock bands acquire their learning disabilities through years of drug abuse and hard living on the road, but the members of British punk outfit Heavy Load



THE GREAT MATCH ★★★★★

HEAVY LOAD ★★★★★

were brought together because they had disabilities already, and decided to make some noise about it. Director Jerry Rothwell's documentary chronicles a year in the life of a band formed by three disabled men and two support workers who love playing punk, but somehow also end up becoming the leaders of a disabled-rights movement.

All the usual rockumentary emotional dynamics are here, but with a charming softness that spills over from the band's lack of pretension and pure love of the music. From the charismatic and scatological lead singer Simon to the Elvis-obsessed drummer who wants to be famous, independent and most of all loud, *Heavy Load* is an amazing, heart-felt journey through these musicians' lives. We also get Rothwell's subtle and thoughtful take on the documentary-making process, as he tries to examine the drastic change that the making of the film has wrought upon the band. It's a gem. —*Elliot Kerr*

★★★★★

I SERVED THE KING OF ENGLAND

Sat, Sept 27 (9:15pm)

Not much gets by Jan Dite (Ivan Barnev). He's the kind of waiter who attends at the highest level, a savvy and spotless server to the elite with a very cynical understanding of power. So much so that even the invading Nazi army doesn't ruffle his feathers — he'll gladly carry plates to the emissaries of the Master Race, even take a blood test to prove his own Aryan worthiness. His maître d' Skrivane (Martin Huba) is less willing to collude with the enemy, but what does the old man know about opportunities in the coming new system?

Director Jiri Menzel — best known for his 1967 Czech New Wave debut *Closely Watched Trains* — doesn't pass judgment on Dites; instead, he watches as the young waiter ingratiate himself more and more with the Nazis, leading to an inevitable fall from grace. It's a quiet, subtle film full of telling details and little in the way of a pointed message — what is there has to be picked up, it's not thrust upon you. And while Menzel observes Dites' amoral jockeying, he also lets his camera linger on some of the most delicious-looking feasts in all of cinema. —*Tom Murray*

★★★★★

JONNA'S BODY, PLEASE HOLD

Sat, Oct 4 (4:15pm)

Who hasn't imagined that their organs and

body parts are really autonomous beings, with minds and personalities of their own (many of them quick to complain and generally irritable)? The debut film from writer/performer Jonna Tarnas, an adaptation of her one-woman show, brings that fantasy to life in surreal, cartoony costumes, but flounders almost immediately — mostly because it's a 10-year-old's daydream to begin with, and the hilarity of an anthropomorphic Bowels saying, "We're backed up for miles down here!" doesn't (or shouldn't, anyway) work on adults.

That said, Tarnas hits surprisingly fertile territory as soon as her character develops cancer with no warning whatsoever. The exaggerated banter between Pearl, the brain's perky switchboard operator, and the invading cells — depicted as snooty French boozehounds looking for a party to trash — suddenly locks into place, when juxtaposed with scenes of an increasingly frail and

depressed Jonna. It gives the film's middle third an unexpected depth and tenderness. I'm also quite fond of Sgt. Coif, the aggressive hair general who tries in vain to rally her troops in the face of Jonna's impending chemotherapy. —*Michael Hingston*

★★★★★

LET THE RIGHT ONE IN

Tue, Sept 30 (9:15pm)/Wed, Oct 1 (4pm)

When 12-year-old Oskar asks Eli, the little girl who's moved into the apartment next door, how old she is, she replies, "12... more or less." Eli, as it slowly becomes clear, is a vampire, and as this engrossing, low-key horror film from Sweden (based on a popular novel by John Ajvide Lindqvist) unfolds, Eli finds herself torn between her desire for companionship and the animalistic hunger for blood that rages in her veins. Lina Leandersson, who plays Eli, strikes just the right note in her performance — she has a childlike awkward-

ness to her bearing, but there's something very old and alien and hungry behind her eyes. She's not "cute" — she's got lank, dark hair and a broad nose, and when she feeds on a victim, she doesn't bother to wipe the blood off her chin.

Director Tomas Alfredson makes excellent use of the Swedish setting and the contrast between the snowy ground and the black nighttime sky, where the only sound is the crunching of snow underfoot. There isn't a lot of gore on display here or a lot of special effects, but when Alfredson uses them, he uses them well, especially in the final bloodbath, which he films in a single shot, his camera sitting underwater in a swimming pool. —*Paul Matwychuk*

★★★★★

MAN ON WIRE

Tue, Sept 30 (6:45pm)

Aug. 7 ought to be some kind of national holiday. Or if not a holiday, then some annual way of remembering the anniversary of one of the boldest, most beautiful feats of physical daring of the 20th century. August 7, you see, was the day in 1974 when French tightrope walker Philippe Petit, with the aid of a small crew of ragtag assistants and true believers, sneaked into the south tower of the World Trade Center in New York, made contact with confederates on top of the north tower, strung a wire across the 140-foot void between the two structures... and then walked out onto it. He spent 45 minutes out there before surrendering to police.

James Marsh's spellbinding documentary climaxes with Petit's walk, and my God, but you've never seen anything so moving in your life as the sight of this man balancing so high in the sky, concentrating so hard on the task at hand as to reach practically a state of grace. But Marsh devotes an equal amount of time to the six years of planning that

went into "le coup" — and he's smart enough to let the still-youthful Petit, a born raconteur, handle most of the storytelling. Absolutely magical — don't miss this one. —*Paul Matwychuk*

★★★★★

THE MIRACLE

Sat, Oct 4 (4:15pm)

Tekki Lomnicki, a little person with a case of diastrophic dwarfism that leaves her perpetually in crutches, narrates and stars in this visually colorful half-hour film about growing up with an overbearing, worried mother and the bookend miracles that define her life. One is the fact that she lived at all — she was dead at birth, revived while a nun was hurriedly administering last rites — the other is her religious mother's longstanding desire to visit to the healing waters at Lourdes in France.

Tekki's overactive imagination makes for a number of at times hilarious, at times painful sequences as she asserts her independence from mom, with musical sequences, Little League baseball fantasies, and a Paris that only ever existed in film. Once in Paris to attend junior college, she finally escapes her mother's constant fretting about her safety, and when Tekki invites her over to visit — with a trip on the books for an appointment at Lourdes — the potential for disappointment clouds the reunion. —*Tom Murray*

★★★★★

A NECESSARY DEATH

Sat, Sept 27 (4:45pm)

Mmmm, maybe not that necessary. Director Daniel Stamm's faux behind-the-scenes documentary of a student filmmaker who wants to chronicle a real-life suicide is sort of like *The Blair Witch Project* by way of Camus, though apologies are due to both.



THE MIRACLE ★★★★★

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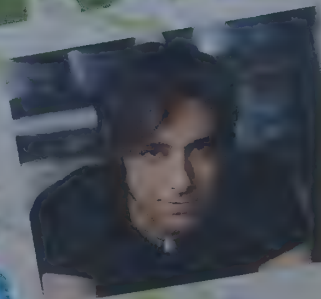
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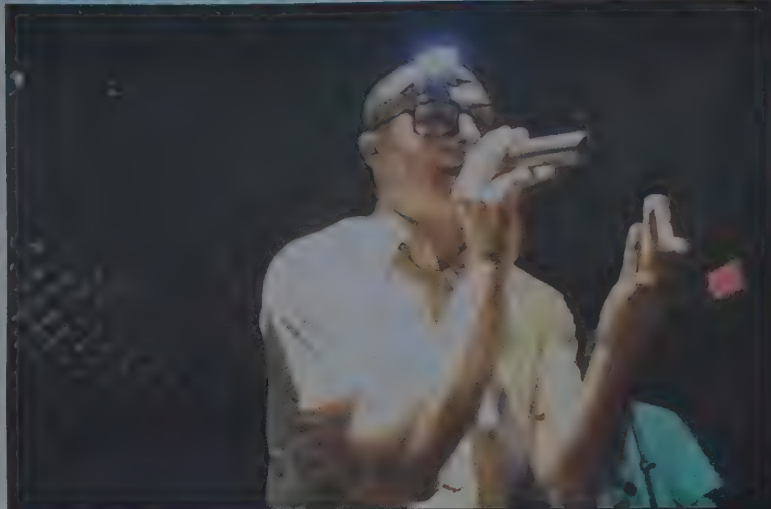
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NERDCORE RISING ★★★☆☆



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Shot vérité-style, the movie charts how the lives of the filmmaker and his crew become entwined with that of a solitary young man who plans to die before the inoperable tumour in his brain slowly kills him.

The performances and mood are persuasively natural and well-calibrated, but the manipulative script rings a little hollow when the moral and spiritual issues raised in the first half around filming someone as they plan self-murder give way to melodrama that really doesn't sit well with the story's more serious intentions. Without a doubt, *A Necessary Death* is well-made shoestring cinema, but it ends up being troubling in ways it almost certainly doesn't mean to be. —Scott Lingley

★★★☆☆

NERDCORE RISING

Thu, Oct 2 (9:30pm)

There's something so endearing about nerds: they're always trying so damn hard to be funny about their dorkiness — and that tendency toward self-deprecation makes a perfect foil for the "I'm so dope" posturing of hip hop. Enter MC Frontalot, aka Godfather of Nerdcore. For those of you who don't know what nerdcore is, but are into such nerdy pursuits as Dungeons and Dragons, Magic: The Gathering, comic books, *Star Wars*, and Ralph Macchio (all of which are referenced in the film), you're in for quite a treat. Maybe this funny little doc will even introduce you to your new favourite music genre — who'd have thought all those hours you spent playing *World of Warcraft* would help make you a rap fan?

Negin Farsad's documentary follows MC Frontalot and his band on their first U.S. tour, the journey interspersed with interviews from notorious nerds (Brian Posehn), satirists (Weird Al Yankovic), and hip hop experts (Prince Paul and J-Live) musing about what the emergence of nerdcore says about the seemingly antithetical worlds of hip hop and nerdism. The film's most endearing moments are the ones where Frontalot and his crew come to terms with their own nerdiness: that's who they are, and embracing who you are is what "true hip hop" is really all about, according to Prince Paul. Turns out white dorky guys can rap after

all. —Fawnda Mithruth
★★★★☆

NURSE.FIGHTER.BOY

City Centre 9 (Mon, Sept 29, 9:30pm)

Charles Officer's modern-day urban love story about a terminally ill nurse, her brilliant son, and a street fighter past his prime has all the makings of a great film: sadly, it can't quite get a handle on its pacing. Even with Steve Cosens' beautiful cinematography, the flat topography of the storyline fails to evoke any emotion besides unvarying melancholy.

The acting is solid — especially from young Daniel J. Gordon, who nails the character of Ciel, the boy, with the skill of a seasoned veteran. (Apparently, Officer originally envisioned the character as an eight-year-old, but he was so impressed by 12-year-old Gordon's audition that he rewrote the script to accommodate him.) And it's nice to see Clark Johnson, from *Homicide* and *The Wire*, getting a decent big-screen role as Silence, the fighter. The film is visually amazing, but don't expect to walk away stunned by the content. Like my sister said, "If a guy was to take me to this movie on a date, I'd fall asleep."

—Andrew Paul

★★★★☆

ON BROADWAY

Sat, Oct 4 (7:30pm)

A priest, a funeral director and Joey McIntyre from *New Kids on the Block* walk into a bar... and if you're expecting a punchline, there isn't one because absolutely nothing about *On Broadway* is funny.

Okay, I lie. There is, in fact, one thing funny about this movie: the random cast. You have Joey McIntyre as Jack O'Toole, the newbie Boston Irish playwright, who gives up his steady job as a construction worker to write and produce a play inspired by his uncle's death. Eliza Dushku, of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fame, plays a lost soul from Maine who is so moved by O'Toole's play that she offers her acting services free of charge. *Arrested Development*'s Will Arnett contributes the film's only palatable performance as a funeral director who lurks around in an effort to break into the community theatre "business." And lastly, there's SNL's

Amy Poehler, who drops by twice to play a quirky Hollywood movie set designer. How writer/director Dave McLaughlin managed to pull such a kooky cast together to such disastrous effect would probably make for a better film than this great big chunk of Irish cliché and straight-up bad acting. —*Kathleen Bell*
★☆☆☆

ONE WEEK

Thu, Oct 2 (6:45pm)

"What would you do if you had one day, one week, or one month to live?" That's the question *One Week* asks itself and its audience. No need to answer now. First, watch disillusioned schoolteacher Ben Tyler struggle to find his answer. Tyler is a remarkably normal guy who is gently given life by one-time *Dawson's Creek* star Joshua Jackson. He doesn't say much; instead a narrator reveals the thoughts and life changing events that remarkably normal guys usually keep to themselves.

When Tyler is diagnosed with cancer — essentially receiving a death sentence — he decides to take a motorcycle trip across Canada. As the movie moves over the land, audiences get to revel in everything that is beautiful, funny, and, occasionally, painful about our country. Sweeping landscapes frame our confused protagonist as he takes photos of Canada's roadside oddities. With many a celeb appearance, including Mr. Stanley's Cup, and a fun CanRock soundtrack, *One Week* is unapologetically Canadian. And we are all the richer for it. —*Kathleen Bell*
★★★★

PONTPOOL

Fri, Sept 18 (7pm)

Maverick Canadian director Bruce McDonald (*Hard Core Logo*, *Highway 61*, *The Tracey Fragments*) turns the zombie genre on its head with this tale of a caustic talk-radio DJ (Stephen McHattie) and a pair of production personnel who find themselves trapped in their small-town studio by a plague of violence they can just barely imagine from the eyewitness accounts they get over the phone.

A bit slow to start, *Pontpool* soon conjures an oppressive, claustrophobic sense of dread laced with McDonald's trademark eccentric humour, culminating in the requisite — though hardly predictable — zombie siege. The main characters are brought to intriguing life by McHattie, Lisa Houle, and Georgina Reilly, so much so that you really don't want any of them to become zombie-food. But the script paints itself into a corner when it tries to take its high-concept premise to some kind of comprehensible resolution. Even so, there's no shortage of eerie, intelligent thrills in the getting there. —*Scott Lingley*
★★★★

THE PROJECT

Sat, Sept 27 (2:30pm)

What happens when you're fresh out of film school and want to make a gritty documentary about life in the Brooklyn projects, but no one takes your privileged white male ass seriously enough to fund your little project? If you're writer/director Ryan Pirovitz, you flip it metaclinical-style on the wack producers who just don't understand, and write a

faux documentary about a group of naive young white filmmakers and their struggle to create a documentary about life in the Brooklyn projects. Then you sign rapper/actor Juelz Santana of *The Diplomats* to play one of the troubled Brooklyn youths and poof! Suddenly the sky rains money. Unfortunately, even if you get the benjamins, that doesn't automatically mean your film gets any smarter or less patronizing — it just means you have decent lighting. The film's writing is heavy-handed and the issues it raises about the influence documentarians have on their subjects are simplistic and obvious, and the way Piotrovicz's shaky-doc camera frequently drifts into "accidental" beautifully framed shots gets pretty tiresome. This one's maybe worth a shot if you're a Santana fan, but otherwise I'd give the filmmaker a few more years to soak in his creative juices. —*Elliot Kerr*
★★☆☆

SEX POSITIVE!

Tue, Sept 30 (9:30pm)

Daryl Wein's documentary about largely forgotten safe sex pioneer Richard Berkowitz is a captivating indictment of the failure of large segments of the gay community to take AIDS prevention seriously when the disease was first identified in the early 1980s.

Wein, Berkowitz, and others are careful not to let government and other authorities off the hook, but *Sex Positive* is more about the trajectory of the crisis within the gay community itself. Using vintage media clips and interviews with activists, Wein exposes the protracted battle between Berkowitz and his small band of Cassandras on the one hand, and iconic community leaders like Larry Kramer on the other, who angrily denied the integral role that promiscuity and unsafe sex practices played in the epidemic's spread and dismissed Berkowitz as a self-hating puritan.

Recent interviews with Berkowitz, his mother, friends, and old adversaries round out a portrait of a lifelong activist who saw his dream of sexual liberation shattered by a nightmarish illness that claimed so many of his contemporaries — and which is now making a resurgence, especially among young men who haven't yet had the experience of losing most of their friends to the disease. Present-day activists are asked if they know who Berkowitz is, and none of them do. But despite continuous setbacks, including Berkowitz's own long illness, Wein shows us a man who is remarkably grounded and able to laugh — and, indeed, be positive. —*Barry Bristman*
★★★★

UNDER THE SNOW

Mon, Sept 29 (5pm)

Candela Figueira's story of a group of workers who develop an unlikely friendship amidst the monotony of Spanish factory life will leave you feeling good, even if the film quality makes it look like a Spanish version of *Coronation Street*.

Angela (Laura De Pedro) and Jairo (Maiken Belita) are two young kids with big dreams of escaping the routine of the factory. De Pedro and Belita have great chemistry — so much so that you can almost smell Jairo's pheromones each time Angela shares the screen

ONE WEEK ★★★★★



with him. Meanwhile, on the other side of the generation gap, Karrenbu (Asun Aguinaco) and Javier (Gabriel Latorre) are feeling the frustration of being over the hill with no time left to follow their dreams. However, their kindness and wisdom nicely complement Angela and Jairo's adolescent anxiety, and together it all provides a vivid portrait of working-class life that'll be recognizable no matter where you come from. —*Andrew Paul*
★★★★

WAR EAGLE, ARKANSAS

Sun, Sept 11 (4:45pm)

War Eagle, Arkansas is one of those sports movies that aren't really sports movies at all. This one's a coming-of-age story masquerading as a baseball flick — at least until the halfway point, when it throws off its disguise and finally becomes interesting. Enoch (Luke Grimes) is a promising pitcher in a dead-end town. He suffers from a debilitating stutter, and his best (and only) friend is a Samuel, known affectionately as Wheels (Dan McCabe), who has cerebral palsy. On their own, the two teenagers navigate their youth with great difficulty, but together they function as a complete person. But when a potential baseball scholarship drops into Enoch's lap, a rift forms between them.

It's all standard indie fare, but the two lead performances make *War Eagle, Arkansas* worth watching. McCabe never exploits his character's handicaps for cheap pity, but captures the sort of unknowable frustration that people like Wheels must experience on a daily basis; he's a memorable character not because of his disabilities, but despite them. Grimes, who bears an uncanny resemblance to a young Elvis Presley, is equally effective: when he stutters in front of the girl he has a crush on, his inability to communicate his emotions is visible on his face and in his body language.

War Eagle, Arkansas moves at a leisurely pace, but it almost feels too short. —*Renato Pagnani*
★★★★

WHAT WE DO IS SECRET

Fri, Oct 3 (9:30pm)

Oliver Stone's *The Doors* meets Penelope Spheeris' 1984 cult classic *Suburbia* in this counterculture rockumentary by director Rodger Grossman about the seminal punk act The Germs, the founding fathers of the wave of "fuck-you" joke bands of the late 1970s, who found themselves suddenly being taken seriously by an entire generation of social outcasts. But they didn't have much of a chance to capitalize on their popularity; the band released only one album before their charismatic, self-loathing, drug-abusing lead singer Darby Crash died of an overdose in 1980.

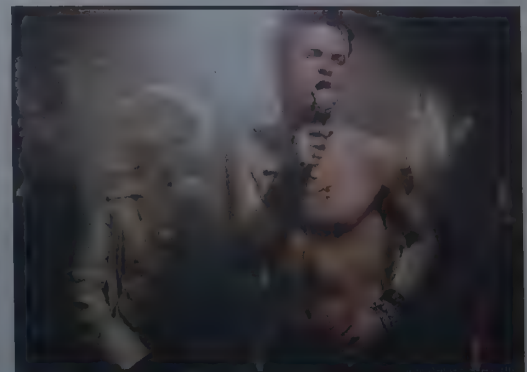
Grossman's work has all the components of the typical rock movie, even if the milieu — immature, narcissistic punks as opposed to likably lost mid-level arena-rockers — has less nostalgic appeal than Cameron Crowe's *Almost Famous*. That said, *What We Do Is Secret* is well-shot, well-directed and well-acted, especially by Shane West as Darby Crash, whose performance hits you like a hot shot in the forearm, leaving you with a dirty feeling in your veins and a craving for more. —*Andrew Paul*
★★★★

WHEREVER YOU ARE

Tue, Sept 30 (5pm)

After the good (if vastly overrated) *Little Miss Sunshine* became a surprise success, dozens of copycats emerged with the hopes that lightning might strike twice. Like most of these imitators, director Rob Margolies' *Wherever You Are* tries too hard. Ironically, that makes it the opposite of *Little Miss Sunshine*, which felt nearly effortless.

Each member of the middle-class, suburban Bernstein family is messed up in ways intended to be endearing, but which are actually hugely annoying. They decide to visit a family therapist (played tenderly by Joe Morton), who eventually exorcises the skeletons from their closets. The comedy is hit-or-miss, too convinced of its own hilarity to resonate honestly. But when the film morphs into a more traditional family drama, it has better luck — Margolies has a better feel for the weepy bits than the pee-your-pants bits. If you can get past its first half, there's some compelling material to be found in *Wherever You Are*. Which is sort of like the relationship I had with the Bernsteins: I hated them at first, then I just felt kind of bad for them. —*Renato Pagnani*
★★☆☆



WHAT WE DO IS SECRET ★★★★★

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MUSIC PREVIEW • METAL • BY JONN KMECH | 644 words

They Really Do Act Like Vikings

THEIR LEADER MAY SEEM A LITTLE LIKE A ROMAN DICTATOR, BUT OPETH'S SCANDINAVIAN ROOTS ARE WHAT MAKE THEM STRONG

OPETH

w/ High on Fire, Nachtmystium, Sept. 30 (doors at 7pm), Edmonton Event Centre (888-270-51, WEM). Tickets: \$28.50 available through Ticketmaster (451-8000/ticketmaster.ca)

It's only fitting that every part of the Opeth experience be loud, whether it be their growled lyrics, their hammerhead riffs, or their interviews.

"Sorry, we're just doing sound-check!" exclaims guitarist Fredrik Åkesson over the phone, practically yelling as the sharp snap of snare drums clatters in the background. "It's tough to find a quiet area!"

Yet despite the noise around him, Åkesson exudes a laid-back, boyish charm, aided by his cheerful Swedish accent and constant giggling at his own statements. As the newest member of Opeth, Åkesson has plenty to be excited about, considering he's already become part of the Swedish group's creative process. He co-wrote "Porcelain Heart," the first single off the band's 10th album, *Watershed*, with Mikael Åkerfeldt, the main songwriting force behind Opeth since the band's inception in 1990. Naturally, Åkesson had only words of praise to describe his notoriously hedonistic frontman.

"I think he's very cool. We get along

really good, I must say, even though he's a Caligula-like band leader — he's like Caligula, the Roman emperor." He pauses, then laughs. "No, not really. He's not cocky or anything. He's a cool guy, and I think he makes good decisions for the band. It's never gotten to the point where we argue about anything."

Indeed, Åkerfeldt's leadership over the years has molded Opeth into one of the most influential acts in the sizable Northern European metal scene. Åkesson admits that he was a fan of the group long before he joined them. Growing up in Sweden,

I'LL ALWAYS HAVE LONG HAIR AND THAT'S THE WAY IT'S GOING TO BE... SINCE I WAS 12, WHEN MY MOM ALLOWED ME GROW IT LONGER.

with such a prominent metal following, Åkesson wanted to be a metal guitarist since he was asking for milk money... and permission to grow out his hair.

"I'll always have long hair and that's the way it's going to be," he says. "Not when I was born, of course, but since I was 12 years old, when my mom allowed me grow it longer. But [my parents] have been very supportive to me. My dad was the one who showed me my first chords, and he didn't force me to go

to high school, because I just wanted to play when I was in ninth grade. He was working in the factory so I could buy my first Marshall stack, and he said, 'If nothing happens by the time you're 19, then you have to do some studying.' I got a gig with this band called Talisman when I was 19, so I just made it. Education is good too. But I gambled a bit and here I am."

Even though he notes that he wouldn't recommend his path to any bright-eyed, shaggy-haired youth, Åkesson's stories of living the rock star life on the road might be enough to convince any adolescent to toss down their books and pick up an axe. Needless to say, if the Opeth longboat were to pull up to your coastal town 1,000 years ago, he'd probably be the first one on land, sporting a horned helmet and emitting a deafening roar as he unfurled his battle axe. Luckily, modern-day Norsemen make do with alcohol and wrestling.

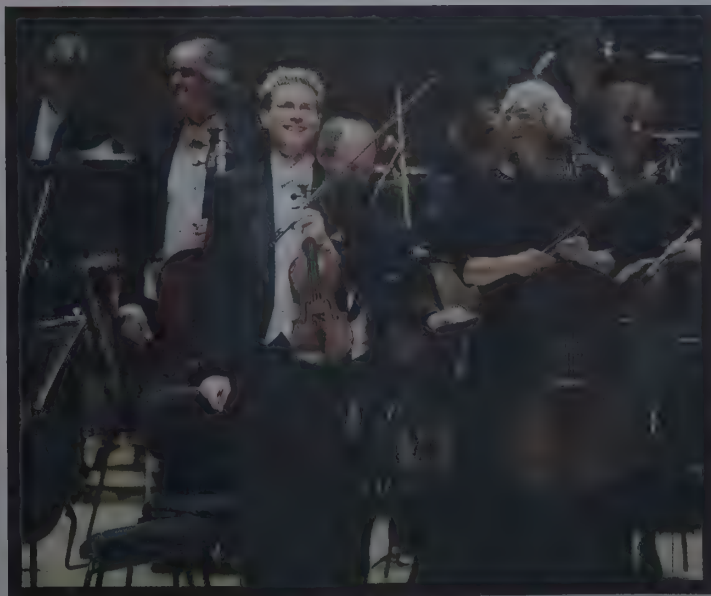
"I was really drunk when we left Japan, so I don't remember this, but I was apparently carrying around our drummer [Martin "Axe" Axenrot] and screaming Viking drawls, like 'Rawwwr!'" Åkesson emits a throaty scream much like the death throes of some prehistoric bird, before chuckling again.

"And we started a fight in the little van that took us to the airport — we were in a fit, wrestling and stuff. It was plain insane, apparently, and the driver was pretty pissed at me. I don't recall much of that."



Where's The Longboat, Lads? | You won't find it in the woods. Opeth. Not in these woods. PHOTO SUPPLIED

SEEN IT LIVE • GREAT GIGS YOU MISSED LAST WEEK



MORE Stuff White People Like | Violinist Martin Riseley opens the ESO's Master's Series last Friday night at the Winspear Centre. PHOTO BY EPIC PHOTOGRAPHY

THE ESO MASTERS OPENING NIGHT

WINSPEAR CENTRE • SEPT. 19

Though Leonard Bernstein composed musicals that appealed to the masses, many of his concert pieces are actually pretty intense technical exercises. This showed on the faces of ESO members last Friday night as they worked through his *Serenade for Violin, Strings and Percussion*: "After Plato's Symposium." They looked excited yet anxious — as if they were doing a really hard sudoku puzzle with a couple thousand people watching them. With Martin Riseley as the featured soloist, concertmaster duties for the evening fell to Broderick ("Broddy") Olson to man the ship under Bill Eddins' direction. The overture from Rossini's *La Gazza Ladra* got the evening started with rousing and warm familiar themes.

After the exhausting complexities of the Bernstein piece, the second half of the program featured one of the titans of the Romantic era: Brahms' fourth symphony, which the orchestra treated to a smooth, lush performance that was almost too comforting. Glad I had that chai at intermission.

PROSPER PRODANIUK

THE BUG

STARLITE ROOM • SEPT. 21

Warning: extreme bass may cause sterility. What? Well, maybe not, but my boys did quiver measurably — along with everything else in The Starlite Room — under the brunt of an incredibly jacked sound system for The Bug's performance on Sunday. No shit: I have never heard it that loud at Starlite before — or any Edmonton club, for that matter. And thank goodness too: The Bug's penetrating brand of dubstep and dancehall just wouldn't have felt right otherwise. Bad sound at a gig prior to Edmonton was to blame for the no-show by Warrior Queen. Apparently, her voice was shot after being forced to scream rather than sing her vocals. Too bad. A live vocalist might have gotten people dancing more, though the modest crowd did seem to appreciate simply getting concussed by the onslaught. A footnote to those who did attend: the statuesque black woman who opened was in fact Calgary's Donna Dada. She was a little taken aback when I asked her for a mix CD, and a little embarrassed that she didn't have one. But see this gal — her raw set of straight-up, old-school jungle was good times.

YURI WUENSCH

I Stood Where Ziggy Stardust Was Shot



**WILDLIFE FISH GRIWKOWSKY
FISH GOES TO LONDON IN
SEARCH OF BRIT-ROCK GLORY,
AND FINDS MORE COOL, GROSS
THINGS IN MUSEUMS INSTEAD**

LONDON, UK — The toilets over here, there's such determined things. No dilly-dallying and mucking about; more like the loos on an aeroplane...

Jesus, I'm starting to think like *Coronation Street*. A week navigating the Underground on an iTouch

route widget will do that to you — everything comes into the ears first, wrapping around, oozing context into the language centre of the brain. You hear it all first. Terrible squabbles: women called retards by their boyfriends, men escalating into narrowly precise insults. Sirens that sound like singing cats. The deafening roar and push of fresh air when your train blasts in exactly to the predicted second. Besides that perfection, not entirely unlike home, I guess — just seven times the people and history stretching back before the Romans.

Guys, I stared at so many gross things today it's incredible. The Hunarian collection has the skeleton of a human giant, the inflated skull of a dead Chinese mutant and

various Victorian oil team portraits of various genetic superstars, none of whom ever shot spider webs out of their wrists.

At a different museum, The Wellcome, things were weirder: ivory sex pendants, a voodoo ram head and the original copy of Hieronymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, which apparently includes urinating down your own body and hanging out with giant birds, according to the artist. Downstairs, a set of merely 26 of the *tens of thousands* of skeletons this place has, all unearthed by annoyed construction workers wondering if this is going to delay their paycheques. The display puts *Body Worlds* to artistic shame. Simply and equally laid out bones: a guess at age, year of death and cause by things like syphilis or the charming "natural decay."

But even stranger still, South London's dirty-sounding Horniman, a completely nuts amassing of tribal masks, musical instruments by the

thousands, and the kicker: a meta natural history museum which takes its original, massive stock of not-quite-right taxidermy and calls it a museum's museum, the history of history. The best is a walrus from Canada, stuffed by naive artisans who didn't think walrus (yes) had fat folds. So the thing looks like an inflated condom.

London. A marvelous place, even though my Irish friend has a point about its hoodlums who, any day, could take down your average Sherwood Parkies with attitude alone. The U.K. is still a little soft on being that good at music, which I blame entirely on a most wicked and early start which subsequently gave them too much confidence for the rest of time. There is, for example, a popular stage musical based on the music of Take That, Robbie Williams' band. We certainly play shit that bad, but there's no long-term loyalty. Canadian fans of trash tend to channel-flip, quite literally.

But the history here is undeniable. Just tonight, I finally made it to 23 Heddton St., where a posh, canopied pair of restaurants cockblocks most of the background warehouse when David Bowie stood here for the cover of 1972's *Ziggy Stardust*. We spotted the back cover phone booth first, barging onto the patio and recreating, shamelessly, some moment in time where Bowie no doubt littered cigarette butts.

But I was genuinely silenced early in the day at the gravestone of not a rock 'n' roller, but the writer who got me really interested in the way real sentences work: Douglas Adams. His stone is a little slate monolith among thousands of graves which are mostly losing the battle against nature in a spectacular battle without any perceivable motion. Oh, the squirrels titter and race around near Karl Marx's obese monument. But the trees are patiently taking this entire world with their own whispered music.

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FUNNY AS WELL AS A BLASPHEMOUS DETONATION OF ALL THINGS HOLY AND SCRIPTURAL



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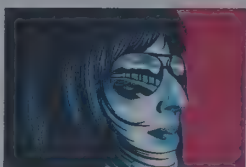


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Snore Stories From Shad



EAR TO THE ASPHALT ANN VRIED
JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE
NOMINATED FOR THE POLARIS
PRIZE DOESN'T MEAN CRAZY
SHIT WILL HAPPEN

When I phone acclaimed Canadian hip hop artist Shad (né Shadrach Kabango) in search of a road story, I'm secretly glad I don't get him on the phone immediately. That way, I figure, he'll have time to think of an especially funny/weird/bizarre tale to tell. So when he calls me back just a few minutes later, I'm thrilled. That's a sure sign he has a great story he can't wait to share, right?

"There was one thing that happened that I thought was weird, but no one else thought was weird," Shad begins. "Outside of our show one time was what appeared to me to be a McDonald's street team, which I thought was really weird, because McDonald's doesn't really need a street team, you know? Most people have heard of them since they were like, six months old."

"True," I say, wondering where this is going.

"Yeah. So I got an Egg McMuffin t-shirt, and a Dogg Pound CD from 2001."

He pauses.

"For some reason that's the weirdest thing that comes to mind," he concludes. "Maybe I'm just really boring, but that's the weirdest thing."

Not to pass judgment on Shad's boringness, but there's no way this anecdote will fill a column.

"Well," I say hopefully, "have you ever gotten lost on tour or anything like that?"

"Well, no," Shad says, "cause in Canada you kind of stick to the one highway, you know?"

I say nothing. Three thoughts are forming in my mind, however: (1) How come I still manage to get lost? Where is this one highway I'm supposed to be sticking to? What about Confusion Corner in Winnipeg, for example? (2) Canadians not living along this one mystery highway will never get to see Shad perform! And (3) this interview is going nowhere fast.

Shad continues, unaware of my worries: "The East Coast usually provides some good stories, like super-friendly people, you know? Like this one guy in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. We crash at his place and he took us around to like the farmers market in town and all these crazy places."

"Crazy places like what?"

"Oh, he cooked us quail at his restaurant, which was pretty cool."

Now, on a craziness scale of one to ten, eating quail dinner is a 2.46 at best. I am getting increasingly worried.

"Do you have anything in contrast that is bad," I ask, "like where people



No Ma No Ma No | We're lovin' Shad. SUPPLIED

screwed you over?" For once in my life, I find myself wishing there was something terrible that happened to a fellow musician.

"Well," Shad says, "one time we played this frosh week show at a university but they didn't quite plan it right, and by the time we were going on it was completely dark and there was no one there, so we were just playing in the dark, by ourselves. We had stuffed our van full of gear, but we didn't need any of it. They had rented stuff for us, so we drove with our faces slammed up against amps and stuff unnecessarily."

By now I have concluded that not every musician lives in an extreme rollercoaster ride world of blessings and curses, elations and disasters. These are people I envy. However, they are perhaps not the ones I should interview for this column. Quail dinner is a nice treat, crowded vans aren't, and it is a bit weird that McDonald's does the grassroots thing. But good news: Edmonton happens to be along the one highway! At least that's what I assume; Shad is performing at the Urban Lounge on Sept. 25.

LIVE MUSIC

THURSDAY

ALTERNATIVE

ANDREA HOUSE HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH CD Release Party. With guest Robin Hunter. Doors at 7:30 p.m.
HEY OCEAN URBAN LOUNGE No minors. Doors at 9 p.m.
[Info: www.urbanlounge.net](http://www.urbanlounge.net)

DIS/CLUB NIGHTS

DI HARRY JAMES THE DOCKS Every Thu.
HIGHER LEVEL THURSDAYS LEVEL 2 LOUNGE Drum & bass with DJ's Dreadnought, Phil Cat, MC Enlite, and guests. Every Thu.
ILLOE BOS NEW CITY LIKWID LOUNGE with Dexter Nebula & Anarchy Adam. Every Thu.
JUNIOR BROWN RED STAR Every Thu.
MIA FELLOW BUDDY'S with DJ West Coast Baby Daddy. Every Thu.
PUB NIGHT THURSDAYS THE BANK Every Thu.
SALSA STYLE THURSDAYS THE BANK ULTRA LOUNGE Every Thu.
URBAN SUBSTANCE THURSDAYS GINGUR SKUL LOUNGE with Urban Substance Sound Crew. Every Thu.

JAZZ

GRAHAM LAWRENCE JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Doors 8 p.m.

FRIDAY

ALTERNATIVE

CHINA WHITE/JET NIGHT CLUB Doors at 9 p.m. \$5 at the door. No minors. [Info: www.jetnightclub.ca](http://www.jetnightclub.ca).
DARRYL MATTHEWS HILBERT'S Doors at 8 p.m. \$10 at the door. [Info: www.hilberts.ca](http://www.hilberts.ca).
HELENA MAGEROWSKI FRESH START BAKERY & BISTRO With guests. \$5 all the door. [Info: www.freshstartbistro.com/780-433-9623](http://www.freshstartbistro.com/780-433-9623).
ROY BOOK BINDER ST. BASIL'S CULTURAL CENTRE With Little Miss Higgins and Tim Williams. Doors at 7 p.m.
SUICIDAL BRIDE RECORDS HAZELDEAN HALL With All Else Falls, Smoothie, Gully Public, Corporate Vampires, A Kid Named Texas and Scalpel. Doors at 6 p.m. \$10 at the door.

BLUES & ROOTS

BRIAN GREGG DEVANEY'S IRISH PUB No cover. Doors at 9:30 p.m.
MISTER LUCKY GIBBONS HOTEL No cover. Show at 9:30 p.m.

DIS/CLUB NIGHTS

BITCH BITCH BITCH NEW CITY SUBURBS Every Fri.
CONNECTED FRIDAYS THE BANK ULTRA LOUNGE Local house & international guest DJs. Every Fri.
DI CLAY STONEHOUSE PUB Every Fri.
DI EDDY TOONFLASH BUDDY'S Every Fri.
DI LOOSE CANNON IRON HORSE Every Fri.
DI SHAWNIBIS ON THE ROCKS Every Fri.
FORBIDDEN FRIDAYS EMPIRE BALLROOM Every Fri.
FORMULA FRIDAYS LEVEL 2 LOUNGE DJ Groovy Cuvy, DJ Fluize. Every Fri.
FRIDAY NIGHT BREAK OUT NEW CITY LIKWID LOUNGE with Anarchy Adam and G-Whiz. Every Fri.
JUKY DJ SUED LOUNGE Every Fri.
THE MOD CLUB HALO SOUL R&B. Indie, Brit pop, new wave, reggae & classic punk. DJs Blue Jay & Tavy D. Every Fri.
NEON NIGHTS THE BANK Every Fri.
RED FRIDAYS THE DOCKS Military appreciation night. Every Fri.
ROCK THE GLOBE WEEKENDS GLOBE TAP BAR & GRILL Every Fri.
SEXY FRIDAY 180 DEGREES Reggae and Top 40 with Generation IVEXX & DJ G-Unit. Every Fri.

JAZZ

DINO DOMINELLI ALL STAR JAZZ BAND JEFFREY'S CAFE & WINE BAR \$15 at the door.
GRAHAM LAWRENCE JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Doors at 8 p.m.

POP & ROCK

ALLAN CHRISTIE CASINO EDMONTON Info: 780-463-9467.
CHRISTINE HORNE TOUCH OF CLASS GAMING ROOM Doors at 8:30 p.m.
WONITHA THOMAS BEAT X-WRECKS No cover. Doors at 8 p.m.

SATURDAY

ALTERNATIVE

ANNA BEAUMONT & FRIENDS VILLAGE LIFESTYLES With Tracy Reed. Doors at 7:30 p.m. Info: 780-988-8804.
ANVIL CENTURY CASINO Info: 780-643-4000.
CHINA WHITE/JET NIGHT CLUB Doors at 9 p.m. \$5 at the door. No minors. [Info: www.jetnightclub.ca](http://www.jetnightclub.ca).
SUICIDAL BRIDE RECORDS HAZELDEAN HALL With All Else Falls. In Bath of Hiera, O=Infinity, Damascus, Down the Hatch, AMNH. Enduring the Fall and Land to Nowhere. \$10 at the door. Doors 7 p.m.

BLUES & ROOTS

THE BIX MIX BOYS RIVERJAZZ COMMUNITY HALL CD release party. Doors at 7 p.m. Info: www.myspace.com/bixmixboys.
BRIAN GREGG DEVANEY'S IRISH PUB No cover. Doors at 9:30 p.m.
HARDLINE BLUES BAND QUEEN ALEXANDRA HALL CD release party. \$5 at the door. Doors at 7:30 p.m.
MISTER LUCKY GIBBONS HOTEL No cover. Show at 9:30 p.m.
SALLY'S KRACKERS, RED RAM AND GHOSTKEEPER THE PAWN SHOP A mix of vintage country-blues, indie rock, and Canadiana. Info: www.pawnshoplive.com.
SATURDAY AFTERNOON JAM BLUES ON WHYTE Hosted by Angela Mackenzie. Every Sat.

JAZZ

PETRO POLJUN JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Doors at 8 p.m.

POP & ROCK

ALLAN CHRISTIE CASINO EDMONTON Info: 780-463-9467.
CHRISTINE HORNE TOUCH OF CLASS GAMING ROOM Doors at 8:30 p.m.

SUNDAY

JAZZ

PETRO POLJUN ROYAL COACH DINING ROOM Doors 5 p.m.
THE VALIANT THIEVES HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB CD release party. Jazz quartet covering 80's pop songs. Doors at 8 p.m.

POP & ROCK

ZIMMER'S HOLE VELVET UNDERGROUND With guests. No minors. Doors at 9 p.m. Tickets thru www.ticketmaster.ca.

MONDAY

ALTERNATIVE

DI RUDY ELECTRO BUDDY'S Every Mon.
ECLECTIC NONSENSE BLACK DOG with Confederacy of Dunces, Dad Rock, TJ Hookah, and Rear Admiral Saunders. Every Mon.
MUNCH ON METAL MONDAYS NEW CITY LIKWID LOUNGE Every Mon.

TUESDAY

DIS/CLUB NIGHTS

DI ARROWCHASER BUDDY'S Every Tue.
DI HOT PHILLY RED STAR Experimental indie rock, hip hop, and electro. Every Tue.
COOL LATIN TUESDAYS FUNKY BUDDHA Dance Lessons. Every Tue.

WEDNESDAY

DIS/CLUB NIGHTS

BEATPARTY WEDNESDAYS STOLLI'S Every Wed.
FLASHBACK WEDNESDAYS THE BANK Mash-up retro beats Every Wed.
GLITTER GULCH WEDNESDAYS BLACK DOG with DJ Buster Friendly. Every Wed.
GUEST DJ RED STAR Every Wed.
ROCK OUT WITH YER BOX OUT NEW CITY Every Wed.
WILD CHERRY WEDNESDAYS STOLLI'S with Tripswitch, Rezident Funk, Steve Velocity, Fusion. Every Wed.
WILD STYLE WEDNESDAYS HIP-HOP VELVET UNDERGROUND Every Wed.

CONCERTS

ALICE COOPER JUBILEE AUDITORIUM, SEP 27 Doors at 8 p.m. www.jubileeauditorium.com or www.ticketmaster.ca/780-451-8000.
BANFF CENTRE 75TH ANNIVERSARY ALBERTA TOUR ST. AUGUSTINE'S PARKLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH, SEP 27 Classical music, doors open 7:30 p.m.
BILL ANDERSON A NIGHT WITH THE LEGEND FESTIVAL PLACE, SEP 28 Doors at 7:30 p.m. Tickets thru www.w

ticketmaster.ca.

COLIN JAMES THE ARDEN THEATRE, SEP 26 With Craig Northey. Doors at 7:30 p.m. Info: www.ticketmaster.ca/780-459-1542.
EXPLORATIONS CONCERT SERIES: INTERACTION'S STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE, SEP 26 Showcasing improvised music. Admission at the door or all TIX on the Square at 780-420-1757. Info: www.freejazz.ca/explorations.html.

EXPLORATIONS CONCERT SERIES FINALE: EMBRACE LOVE STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE, SEP 27 Showcasing improvised music. Admission at the door or all TIX on the Square: 780-420-1757. Info: www.freejazz.ca/explorations.html.
JENNIFER WARNES FESTIVAL PLACE, SEP 27 Doors 7:30 p.m. SOLD OUT.
KELLY CLARKSON & REBA MCENTIRE RECALL PLACE, SEP 27 Tickets thru www.ticketmaster.ca. Info: www.recall-place.com.

THE MAGIC OF IRELAND FESTIVAL PLACE, SEP 26 Doors 7:30 p.m. Tickets thru www.ticketmaster.ca.
MUSIC WEDNESDAYS AT NOON 30TH SEASON MCDUGALL UNITED CHURCH Produced by McDougall Concert Association featuring Nelli Peruch, Hiromi Takahashi and Sylvia Shadick-Taylor. Doors at 12:10 p.m., free admission, bring your friends and bag lunch, coffee and tea available.
PRO CORO CANADA PRESENTS SPARKS, HAYDN & VAUGHAN WILLIAMS FRANCIS WINSPEAR CONCERT HALL, SEP 28 In celebration of conductor Richard Sparks' tenth year with Pro Coro Canada, the choir launches its season with two great masses: Vaughan Williams' Mass in G Minor and Haydn's Harmoniemesse. The choir is joined by soloists Joline Kenley, Christy Denksen, Tim Shantz, Paul Grindlay, and the Pro Coro Chamber Orchestra. Info: www.winspearcentre.com.

OPEN STAGE

SATURDAY

BLUES ON WHYTE 4-8:30 p.m. Afternoon jam, visit www.bluesonwhyte.ca.
THE CARROT ARS COFFEEHOUSE 7-10 p.m. Music and poetry open mic.
COAST TO COAST 9 p.m.-2 a.m. with Troy P. Wright.
EXPRESSIONZ CAFE 1ST SAT EVERY MONTH 1-5 p.m. Hosted by Karyn Stirling. Info: www.expressionzcoffee.com.
MORANGO'S TEK CAFE 7-10 p.m. Hosted by Tommy. Info: www.morangostekcafe.com.
THE NEW TAPHOUSE 3-4 p.m. Molson open stage, hosted by Carmen Cook.
THE ROCK PUB AND GRILL Molson Canadian Freeway Jam 4 p.m.-2:30 a.m. No Cover.
XWRECKS 7 p.m.

SUNDAY

DUNDERS PUB Hosted by The Mary Thomas Band.
EDDIE SHORTS 9 p.m. Hosted by Rob Taylor, instruments and gear provided.
HOOGLIGANZ PUB Afternoon jam hosted by Rock 'n Roll Kenny.
LOOP LOUNGE 3-10 p.m. Hosted by JJ Lenny B and The Cats.
NEWCASTLE PUB & GRILL 3-6 p.m. Hosted by Willie James & Crawford.
O'BRYNE'S IRISH PUB 9 p.m. Hosted by Joe Bird.
OVERDRIVE 1:30-5 p.m. "Anything Goes" afternoon acoustic jam hosted by The Shuffleshound.
SON WRITER'S STAGE HILBERT'S 7:10-11:55 St. Hosted by Rhea March. Info: www.hilberts.ca.
TEDDY'S LOUNGE & EATERY 9:30 p.m.

MONDAY

THE IVORY CLUB 8 p.m. Hosted by Marty Vinko.
LPB'S PUB 9 p.m.-12:30 a.m. Hosted by Shaved Poles: Ken, Fred, Gordie, and Matt.
PLEASANTVIEW HALL 7 p.m. Acoustic fiddle jam hosted by Wild Rose Old Time Fiddlers Society. Info: Willy, 780-474-5270.
ROSE BOWL/ROUGE LOUNGE 9 p.m.-12 a.m. with Mike McDonald and Sherry-Lee Wisor.

TUESDAY

THE DRUID 9 p.m. Hosted by Chris Wynters.
THE ROCK PUB AND GRILL 9 p.m.-1 a.m. Ammar's Moosehead Jam, hosted by Mark Ammar, and Noel "Big Cat" Mackenzie. Every Tues. Call 780-458-5571.
SIDELINERS PUB 8 p.m. All Star Jam. Hosted by Alicia Tait and Rickie Siderac.

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COMING

SEP 25 — DEADMAN'S Edmonton Event Centre
SEP 27 — ALICE COOPER Jubilee Auditorium
SEP 27 — KELLY CLARKSON, REBA MCENTIRE Recall Place
OCT 2 — SHERYL CROW, JIM CUDDY Recall Place
OCT 11 — OPRETH Edmonton Event Centre
OCT 13 — CADENCE WEAPOON Starlite Room
OCT 3 — DANIKO JONES Jet Nightclub
OCT 4 — RON SEYMOUR Myer Horowitz Theatre
OCT 4 — DAVID KNOPFLER Festival Place
OCT 4 — GARNET ROGERS Queen Alexandra Hall
OCT 4 — JOE SATIRANI Edmonton Event Centre
OCT 4 — BLIND MELON Jet Nightclub

OCT 6 — BRUCE COCKBURN Winspear Centre
OCT 8 — AMON AMARTH Starlite Room
OCT 8 — TOBY KEITH Recall Place
OCT 9 — HEDLEY Jubilee Auditorium
OCT 9 — IRON & WINE Myer Horowitz
OCT 15 — GOGOL BORDELLO Edmonton Event Centre
OCT 16 — FEIST Recall Place
OCT 17 — CHAD VANGAELLEN McDougall United Church
OCT 18 — MATT MAYES Edmonton Event Centre
OCT 20 — ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK Winspear Centre
OCT 24-25 — CELINE DION Recall Place
OCT 25 — BEDOUIN SOUND CLASH Edmonton Event Centre

OCT 26 — WAYNE NEWTON River Cree Resort & Casino
OCT 29 — BOB DYLAN Recall Place
NOV 5 — JAM TYSON Winspear Centre
NOV 18 — NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK Recall Place
NOV 19 — ALICE BLUNT Recall Place
NOV 21 — KENNY ROGERS Recall Place
NOV 23 — ERIC BIBB Winspear Centre
NOV 25 — CARRIE UNDERWOOD Recall Place
NOV 27 — THE BARRA MACNEELS Myer Horowitz
DEC 10 — SARAH BRIGHTMAN Recall Place
DEC 15 — RITA MACNEIL Winspear Centre
DEC 15 — DRAGONFORCE Edmonton Event Centre

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WEDNESDAY

CAFE BRITT 7-9 p.m. hosted by Paul LePage.
EDDIE SHORTS Open jam, all gear provided.
HAVEN SOCIAL CLUB 7:30 p.m. hosted by Ido Vanderlaan
HOOLIGANZ PUB 7:30 p.m. Hosted by Rock 'n' Roll Kenny.
LITTLE FLOWER OPEN STAGE 8 p.m. Hosted by Brian Gregg. Info: www.littleflower.ca, or 780-429-3624.
THE NEW TAPHOUSE 9 p.m. Hosted by Danny Floyd.
PLEASANTVIEW HALL 7:30 p.m. Bluegrass jam hosted by Northern Bluegrass Circle Music Society.
THE ROCK PUB AND GRILL Unplugged Jam, 9 p.m. - 1 a.m. Bill Cover.
STEEPS TEA LOUNGE Acoustic open mic every Wed. Email Jessie at j.lisbert@gmail.com by Mondays to book a spot that week.

KARAOKE

B-STREET BAR Wed-Sun with Brad Scott.
BLIND PIG Wed & Fri with Shelley.
BUD'S LOUNGE Fri & Sat, 9 p.m.-1:30 a.m. with Mr. Entertainment.
CHIMMY'S Thu, Fri, Sat 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m. with Jimmy.
CHRISTOPHER'S PUB Tue, 9 p.m. with Sonia/Prosound.
CROWN & ANCHOR PUB Thu, 10:30 p.m.
CLIFF'S PUB & PANTRY Sat & Sun with Krista, Liquid Entertainment.
DEVANEY'S Thu, 8 p.m.
DOYLE'S PUB Fri, 10 p.m.-2 a.m. and Sat, 10 p.m.-2 a.m. with Ewan.
THE DRUID Wed, 9 p.m. with Mr. Entertainment.
DUSTER'S PUB Sat.
D.W.'S PUB & GRILL Fri, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. Hosted by Mr. Entertainment.
ECCO PUB Mon, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. with Sonia/Prosound Productions.
ELEMENT LOUNGE Wed, 9 p.m.
FORT GAMING LOUNGE & SPORTS BAR Fri, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. with Angel How.
FOX PUB Tue, 9 p.m.
FUNKY BUDDHA Sun, 9:30 p.m. with Mr. Entertainment.
GAS PUMP Tue & Wed, 9 p.m.-1:30 a.m. with Gord's Live Jukebox.
H2O SPORTS BAR & LOUNGE Tue, Thu, Sat & Sun.
HAWKEYES Too Fri & Sat, 8 p.m. with Hot Karaoke Productions.

HIGHLIGHT • FINGER PICKIN' GOOD



Now That's A Nice Guitar | Can't really say the same for the pose, though. PHOTO SUPPLIED

Alistair Cristl • Sept. 30 • Velvet Underground

The above instrument, a '63 Gibson hollowbody, is a legend in and of itself. With a sound as tangy sweet as honey, it's this Toronto guitarist's weapon of choice in the war on modern pop music. Alistair Cristl finds his inspiration lies with the old (and we do mean *old*) country greats. Woody Guthrie, Chet Atkins, Hank Williams, and for some reason we can't exactly figure out, Jello Biafra, are all listed as musical influences on his bio. S'pose we'll just have to check 'im out on Tuesday to see what all the fuss is about.

HILLTOP PUB Thu, 9:30 p.m.
HOOLIGANZ PUB Thu & Fri with Krista, Liquid Entertainment.
INGLEWOOD PUB Thu 9:30 p.m.-2 a.m. with Gord, Fri & Sat with Jolly Giant. Wed with shauna
JUGS PUB Sat, 9 p.m.
KEEP IT SIMPLE (KIS) CLUB Tue & Sun, 6-10 p.m. Except 2nd Tue of the month.
KNIGHTS PUB SOUTH Fri & Sat, 10 p.m.-2 a.m. Gord's Live Jukebox.
L.B.'S PUB Tue, 9:30 p.m.-1:30 a.m. with The KaraokeNuts.
THE LOCKER ROOM PUB Mon, 9 p.m.-1 a.m. with Norm.
METRO BILLIARDS Tue, 10 p.m.-2 a.m. with Lounge Lizard Entertainment.
MOJO'S Fri, 9:30 p.m. with Sonia/Prosound Productions.

MONA LISA PUB Thu-Sat, 9:30 p.m.-2 a.m. Fri-Sat, with Cathy.
NIKITA'S Tue & Thu, 7 p.m.-midnight with Shelley.
ON THE ROCKS Mon, 9:30 p.m. Drink the Bar Dry Karaoke with Scott Parsons, Mr. Entertainment.
OVERDRIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PUB & GRILL Sat, 9 p.m. with Jennie Joy.
RAMADA SOUTH Thu, 8 p.m. Colin & Ed Music Trivia. Sun, 8 p.m.-midnight with Colin & Ed. Almost Famous.
RATT Tues, 9 p.m. Colin & Ed Music Trivia. Wed, 8 p.m. with Colin. Almost Famous.
ROSARIO'S PUB & KARAOKE CENTRAL Daily, 9 p.m.
WOODY'S PUB Mondays & Saturdays with Host Chad, 8p.m.-12a.m.

VENUE GUIDE

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THE DRUID 11606 JASPER AVE. 780-454-9928.
DUSTERS PUB 6402 118TH AVE. 780-474-5554.
DVB TAVERN 8071 99TH ST. 780-760-0077.
ECCO PUB 9605 118TH AVE. 780-435-5050.
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IVORY CLUB & EBONY LOUNGE 2940 CALGARY TR. SOUTH, 780-465-6800.
JEFFREYS CAFE & WINE BAR 9640 142ND ST. 780-451-8890.
JEKYLL & HYDE PUB 10209 100TH AVE. 780-426-5381.
JET NIGHTCLUB & SPORTS LOUNGE 9221 34TH AVE. 780-466-6552.
JOHN L. HAAR THEATRE 10045 155TH ST. CENTRE FOR THE ARTS, 780-497-4340.
J.R. GRILL & BAR 3901 106TH ST. 780-436-4403.
JUGS PUB 7450 82ND AVE. 780-465-0046.
JULIAN'S PIANO BAR CHATEAU LOUIS, 11727 KINGSWAY AVE. 780-452-7770.
KEEP IT SIMPLE (KIS) CLUB 11720 82ND ST. 780-471-4705.
KNIGHTS PUB SOUTH 1919 105TH ST. 780-461-0587.
L.B.'S PUB 23 AKINS DR., ST. ALBERT, 780-460-9100.
LOCKER ROOM 10209 100TH AVE. 780-421-8892.
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MCDUGALL UNITED CHURCH 10025 101ST ST. 780-428-1818.
MEGATUNES 10355 82ND AVE. 780-434-6342.
METRO BILLIARDS 10250 106TH ST. 780-990-0704.
MOJO'S 15106 86TH AVE., FORT SASX, 780-922-0505.
MONA LISA PUB 9606 118TH AVE. 780-477-7752.
MORANGO'S TEK CAFE 10118 79TH ST. 780-450-9906.
MURRIETTA'S 10612 82ND AVE. 780-438-4100.
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NAKED CYBER CAFE & ESPRESSO BAR 10354 JASPER AVE. 780-425-9730.
NEWCASTLE PUB & GRILL 6108 90TH AVE. 780-490-1999.
NEW CITY 10081 JASPER AVE. 780-429-CLUB.
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MOVIE REVIEW • BLACK COMEDY • BY PAUL MATWYCHUK / 738 words

I Can't Believe I Asphyxiate The Whole Thing

THE MOVIE VERSION OF CHUCK PALAHNIUK'S *CHOKO* HAS SO MANY LABOURED QUIRKS IT CAN HARDLY BREATHE

CHOKO

Directed by Clark Gregg. Starring Sam Rockwell, Anjelica Huston, Kelly Macdonald, Brad William Henke. Opens Fri, Sept. 26.

★☆☆☆

The plot of *Choke* feels like the aftermath of a massive explosion at the quirk factory. The main character, Victor Mancini (Sam Rockwell), is a sex addict who might almost qualify as a recovering sex addict if it weren't for the fact that he frequently sneaks out of his 12-step meetings to bang the girl he's sponsoring on the floor of the men's room. His mother Ida (Anjelica Huston) is in a nursing home, but never recognizes him when he comes to visit. The home is expensive, and Victor's job as an Irish indentured servant at a colonial theme park doesn't cover her expenses, so he picks up extra cash by intentionally choking on his food at fancy restaurants and then exploiting the protective emotions of the people who Heimlich him by persuading them to send him money.

It's an extreme way to make a living, but his mother's habit of kidnapping him from his foster homes and then taking him along with her as she steals buses and breaks into zoos to free the animals would mess anybody up. (He's got a chunk missing from his ear where an escaped lynx bit him.) But there's evidence that he might be the half-cloned son of Jesus Christ, so he's got that going for him.

There's an unmistakable cleaning-out-my-drawers quality to the plot of *Choke*, both Chuck Palahniuk



Sex Colonist | Sam Rockwell is a messianic savior in a turtleneck hat in *Choke*. PHOTO SUPPLIED

original novel and the new film that's been adapted from it — the plot feels like a collection of leftover ideas and images that Palahniuk couldn't find room for in his earlier books *Fight Club* or *Invisible Monsters*. But like a multicoloured ball squeezed together from scraps of plasticine during kindergarten art class, the final product doesn't feel like a single, organic whole. And still *Choke* keeps packing in more oddball details: a wall of stones that Victor's best friend Denny begins building, only to have it turn into a communal art project; an anal bead that gets lost up Victor's ass; Ida's nurse (Kelly Macdonald), who may hold the key to Victor's identity (and who briefly renders him impotent); Victor's hardass boss at the colonial village (played by writer/director Clark Gregg), who insists on

saying "thee" and "thou" even when no tourists are around.

What does it all amount to? Damned if I know — I suspect we're just supposed to turn our brains off and enjoy the whole subversive ride. Myself, I quickly tired of Palahniuk's brand of cheap black humour (few of which are done any favours by Gregg's tonally muddled direction): the scenes in the nursing home, where a demented old lady constantly accuses Victor of touching her "woo-woo," feel particularly tone-deaf.

The sex-addict group therapy sequences, on the other hand, revisit territory that Palahniuk previously explored in *Fight Club*. But I was reminded more strongly of a much superior book by one of Palahniuk's contemporaries: *Infinite Jest*, by the late David Foster Wallace, another

wildly plotted novel that touches on the world of 12-step programs, but which does so with so much more compassion and insight, and an underlying sense of genuine sadness and loss, emotions *Choke* pays only lip service to. In *Choke*, death and addiction are merely springboards for throwaway gags about tranny hookers, naked nuns, and chocolate pudding.

Fight Club may not have had much more depth, but director David Fincher found exactly the right darkly arch tone to give Palahniuk's sardonic observations about the sterile, cubicle-bound culture of the North American male some resonance. *Choke*, meanwhile, is filmed in drab, hospital-corridor colours by cinematographer Tim Orr, and features an appropriately disheveled lead per-

formance from Sam Rockwell that, while game, never convinces us that Victor's fate or the identity of his father is worth caring about.

What, then, is the appeal of Chuck Palahniuk's writing? I recall once reading a review that said his books are mainly popular among guys who don't read many novels, but who think Palahniuk is the world's greatest writer. (When I wondered aloud who reads these books, my co-editor Fawnda Mithrushi dryly replied, "A whole lot of ex-boyfriends.") Like *Fight Club*, *Choke* is the story of an underachieving shlub who finds out he might actually be a modern messiah. I can see how the notion would be appealing — the Harry Potter books are built on a benign version of the same fantasy — but in *Choke*, I had a tough time swallowing it.



Hercules in Chains | The police haul steroid-loving bodybuilder Gregg Valentin off to jail — if indeed any jail can hold him! — in a scene from *Bigger, Stronger, Faster**. PHOTO SUPPLIED

DVD DICTATOR • THE MOVIES YOU MUST BUY THIS TUESDAY

MUSCLES OF STEEL!

Bigger, Stronger, Faster*
DIRECTOR | Christopher Bell

Christopher Bell takes viewers on an eye-opening, quad-blasting tour through the world of steroids in this well-made, cogently argued documentary. Are steroids unhealthy? Bell argues no — the negative side effects of the drugs have been wildly exaggerated in the media and are largely reversible. But Bell doesn't stop there; like a pumped-up Michael Moore, he goes on to examine how the hypocritical American obsession with winning has affected his two brothers, a power-lifter and a would-be pro wrestler, both of whom admit to still taking steroids regularly.

SUIT OF IRON!

Iron Man
CAST | Robert Downey Jr., Gwyneth Paltrow, Jeff Bridges, Terrence Howard

Iron Man may have been only the second-best comic-book movie of the summer, but when you're competing with *The Dark Knight*, there's ain't any shame in the silver medal. Credit director Jon Favreau for bringing a light touch to the often-ponderous superhero genre, and for casting Robert Downey Jr., who finally gets to harness his uniquely roguish charisma to an effects-filled Hollywood blockbuster. Be sure to fast-forward through the closing credits on the DVD to watch the surprise cameo by Samuel L. Jackson.

BALLS OF BRASS!

Taxi to the Dark Side
DIRECTOR | Alex Gibney

Alex Gibney has got to be one of the busiest documentary filmmakers in America: In the last year alone, he executive-produced the excellent Iraq War doc *No End in Sight*, directed Gonzalo: *The Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson*, and he won the Oscar for this troubling account of the arrest, detention, and murder of an innocent Afghan taxi driver by U.S. soldiers in 2002. In a wider sense, though, it's a critique of the Bush administration's growing acceptance of torture as an interrogation tool, in complete defiance of the Geneva convention.

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MOVIE REVIEW • HOMEFRONT • BY PAUL MATWYCHUK (715 words)

On Leave In Las Vegas



Three For The Road | Michael Peña, Rachel McAdams, and Tim Robbins find themselves temporarily carless in *The Lucky Ones*. PHOTO SUPPLIED

PART ROAD MOVIE, PART IRAQ WAR DRAMA, PART INDIE COMEDY, *THE LUCKY ONES* IS BETTER THAN IT SOUNDS

THE LUCKY ONES

Directed by Neil Burger. Starring Tim Robbins, Rachel McAdams, Michael Peña. Opens Fri. Sept. 26.

★★★★☆

Three American soldiers find themselves sharing the same plane to New York: Cheever (the oldest) has finished his tour of duty in Iraq, while Colee (the girl) and TK (the ethnic guy) have a month's leave before they have to return to the desert. They're a mismatched bunch of strangers, and *The Lucky Ones* wastes no time arranging for them to all wind up in the same minivan, driving across America.

And naturally, each of them has their own emotional crisis that gets worked out over the course of the trip: Cheever's wife has told him he wants a divorce, while his son needs \$20,000 in order to pay for his tuition to Stanford; Colee wants to bring her dead boyfriend's guitar back to his family; and TK, who's taken some shrapnel in the groin, wants to go to Vegas and get himself a high-end call girl in hopes of resuscitating his penis before he reunites with his girlfriend.

Wow, this movie sure sounds terrible, doesn't it? But the surprising thing about *The Lucky Ones* is that, despite its screenwriting contrivances (there's even a third-act hurricane), despite the predictability of it: tonal shifts from comic to dramatic, despite director/co-writer Neil Burger's refusal to take any political stance on the war — despite all that, despite even the hurricane and the jaunty score and the scene where Robbins locks the keys in the car, it's actually pretty watchable. (Remem-

ber: faint praise is better than no praise!)

It helps immeasurably that the three leads are so appealing — and, unlike the stars of almost every other Iraq War movie of the last three years, none of them is gunning for an Oscar nomination. Tim Robbins anchors the film as Cheever, a middle-aged guy who accepts all the reversals fate deals him — a failed marriage, a vanished civilian job, a bad back — with the same pained stoicism. Rachel McAdams usually plays such sharp cookies that it takes a few scenes to get used to her as Colee, a young private who does

statement here. His camera doesn't linger over the bland, ugly surroundings; he's just working matter-of-factly with the landscape that he's been given. This must be one of the few Hollywood films where you see the characters eating at a Perkins-style restaurant and you don't feel the director condemning them for their bad taste. It's a small thing, but an important one.

Burger is a tough director to figure out. His first film, 2002's *Interview With the Assassin*, is one of my favourite straight-to-DVD discoveries, a mockumentary conspiracy thriller about the JFK assassination cleverly

THESE CHARACTERS STICK TO THE INTERSTATE, WHERE THE LANDSCAPE CONSISTS OF FEATURELESS INDIANA ASPHALT, CHAIN RESTAURANTS, GAS PLAZAS, MOTEL SIXES, AIRPORT BARS, AND PREFAB HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS.

a lot more talking than thinking. (When the three of them go to McDonald's for dinner, Colee exclaims, completely without irony, that "It all looks so good, I can't decide!") And as TK, Michael Peña (from *Crash* and *World Trade Center*) finds a way to play a character who keeps his emotions to himself without letting his own performance become boring and remote.

Having recently driven across the United States myself, I was also pleased to find that *The Lucky Ones* is one of the few road movies that doesn't turn into an "America the Beautiful" travelogue. These characters stick to the interstate, where the landscape consists of featureless Indiana asphalt, chain restaurants, gas plazas, Motel Sixes, airport bars, and prefab housing developments just visible a couple of miles from the exit ramp. Not that Burger is trying to make any kind of anti-American

conceived to make the most of its budget limitations. He followed that up four years later with *The Illusionist*, a sepia-tinted romance based on a Steven Millhauser story and starring Edward Norton as a 19th-century stage magician which became a surprise date-movie hit. *The Lucky Ones* is much more conventional than either of those two films, and has virtually nothing in common with them except for being better and more tasteful than it looks.

Indeed, if Burger has a main strength as a director, it might be ... well, taste, or at least his ability to pull back the reins the moment a story threatens to become too hokey. The hokum is still there in *The Lucky Ones*, but at least Burger persuades his actors to underplay it and not embarrass themselves. They all get through the movie in one piece — and in Hollywood, that's a successful tour of duty in anybody's book.

★★★★★ **A CLASSIC.**
Shawn Edwards, FOX-TV

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— Peter Travers, *Rolling Stone*

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— Kenneth Turan, *Los Angeles Times*

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— Leah Rozen, *People*

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MOVIE REVIEW • ROMANTIC COMEDY • BY RAMIN OSTAD | 450 words

The Phantom Dentist

RICKY GERVAIS IS A D.D.S. WHO SEES DEAD PEOPLE IN THE SUPERNATURAL CHARMER GHOST TOWN

GHOST TOWN

Directed by David Koepp. Starring Ricky Gervais, Téa Leoni, Greg Kinnear. Now playing

★★★★☆

So a New York dentist walks into a doctor's office for a routine colonoscopy. They put the dentist under, conduct the procedure, and when the dentist wakes up, he can see dead people — annoying, persistent dead people who won't leave him alone until he helps them with unfinished business.

Ghost Town's premise may not sound particularly promising, but the punchline is that it's actually a quite enjoyable, if a bit familiar, romantic comedy. It features British comedy star Ricky Gervais as Bertram Pincus, a misanthropic dentist who is utterly opposed to interacting with people; it's not large groups he despises, just the individuals within them. So when his sixth sense kicks in, he refuses the requests of all but

KOEPP'S IDEA OF ROMANCE INCLUDES EGYPTIAN MUMMIES AND TOOTH DECAY.

one lost soul, Frank (Greg Kinnear) — but only because Frank promises to keep the other ghosts at bay. What's Frank's request? Keep his wife Gwen (Téa Leoni) from remarrying.

Of course, Bertram isn't a stretch for Gervais, who's made a career playing awkward, antisocial curmudgeons in *Extras* and the British version of *The Office*. We've seen all this stuff before, and in *Ghost*, in *Always*, even in (shudder) *Over Her Dead Body*. But writer/director David Koepp — whose credits include *Panic Room*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Carlito's Way* — keeps the film refreshing through unique settings and subtle, witty writing. Even the lightly scatological bit about Pincus going for a colonoscopy works as a cute metaphor — the guy's got a stick up his ass that definitely requires removal — and a great way to introduce the character, having him rebuke his doctor's casual bedside manner.

There are other subtleties, too, that help *Ghost Town* hop over the death-trap of clichéd romcoms. Where most movies would require the lead to undergo a complete personality transformation to win the girl, Pincus charms Gwen by being his cynical, blunt self. Leoni is, as always, an ideal comedic foil, and has a surprising amount of chemistry with Gervais. There's also no "nice guys finish last" mentality here: Gwen's new

fiancé is actually a great guy, despite Frank's objections. There isn't even a clichéd romantic setting or first kiss; Koepp's idea of romance includes Egyptian mummies, tooth decay, and Pincus' sensitive gag reflex.

It's not often that you see a modern romantic comedy that simply allows its stars to interact instead of placing all sorts of artificial plot contrivances and misunderstandings in their way. You wouldn't know it from most films, but isn't that how most people fall in love — by spending time with people they like and are compatible with? *Ghost Town* may be about a man who can see dead people, but in a sense, it's one of the more realistic Hollywood romantic comedies in months.



Is He Having A Laugh? | Ricky Gervais can't escape the dapper spirit of Greg Kinnear in *Ghost Town*. PHOTO SUPPLIED

"EXTREME...POSTMODERN."
James Greenberg, THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

FROM THE AUTHOR OF FIGHT CLUB

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Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times

Rachel McAdams Tim Robbins Michael Peña

Three strangers with nothing to lose. And everything to find.

The Lucky Ones

From the Director of "The Illusionist"

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TELEVISION • AWARDS SHOW BLUES | 569 words

The Emmys Get A Dose Of Reality



TELEPROMPTER: HERE'S A SIMPSON SCHEDULE

TV FANS PAID FOR THE WRITERS' STRIKE... AND NOT JUST WITH THE GODAWFUL REALITY-SHOW EMMY EMCEES

How do you hold the Emmy Awards for the season that wasn't? Very carefully...

The reality of last season was, well, reality ruled. In the absence of scripted shows thanks to the WGA strike, TV managed to coast along on a glut of reality programming, and we barely noticed the difference. Until now, that is.

You know something's changed in Hollywood when reality stars are hosting the Emmys. So much for the Shakespearean showiness of Kelsey Grammar or the fading Botoxed luster of Calista Flockhart. In my opin-

ion, once the Emmys hire presenters like Lauren Conrad (blech), they're degrading any potential the industry has to create quality, thought-provoking entertainment. We can blame the strike for that.

The lack of scripted programming last year was obvious at Sunday night's Emmy ceremony. It seemed like the big budget, made-before-the-strike stuff such as *John Adams* were the big winners, and everything else was treated like Sir Reality. (Come on, say it out loud — you'll get more out of the joke.)

Then again, even *Mad Men*

and editors and non-union writers are creating stories on paper."

It seems to me the Emmys missed a golden opportunity this year for new awards based on "reality." Can't you just see it? The Emmy for Best Picketer (i.e., Outstanding Achievement in Out-Standing) goes to ... Tina Fey! The Emmy for Best Impersonation of a Real Star goes to ... Christian Siriano!

But hey, at least my mad men got some pretty brass baubles. I'm also sincerely thrilled about Bryan Cranston winning Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama for *Breaking Bad*,

ONCE THE EMMYS HIRE PRESENTERS LIKE LAUREN CONRAD, THEY'RE DEGRADING ANY POTENTIAL THE INDUSTRY HAS TO CREATE QUALITY, THOUGHT-PROVOKING ENTERTAINMENT.

showrunner (and confessed reality-schlock fan) Matthew Weiner says, "Anybody who thinks [reality] shows aren't written, whether by editors or writers, is fooling themselves. It's an illusion that they're just filming what's happening. Casting directors

AMC's other great original show. And I sincerely could have lived without the image of Mary Tyler Moore's bare arms burned onto my brain before bedtime.

And since last week I promised to share my thoughts on J.J. Abrams' new show *Fringe*, here we go. It's about FBI agents investigating freaky stuff — hey, wait a minute. Didn't Fox already run this show about 10 years ago?

As is usual for Abrams, the pilot played like a movie. Many Benjamins, and they were all on the screen. The next couple of episodes are still pretty glossy and well-produced, even if the stories are already getting a little thin. And the "fringe science" cases they explore really sounds a lot like X-Files, no matter how they dress them up.

I'm already getting very nervous about Joss Whedon's *Dollhouse* premiere in January. But it turns out that as much as critics and people inside the industry fête these new shows, not that many actually tune in.

There was an article on CNN.com about a month ago on "why TV stars don't watch TV." Most of them point out that they work 12-14 hour days, so it's not like they're going to be home for *Jeopardy!* every night.

Then there are "stars" such as Ricky Gervais, who claims he's in his pyjamas on the couch every day by six.

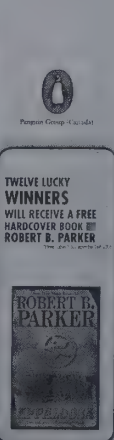
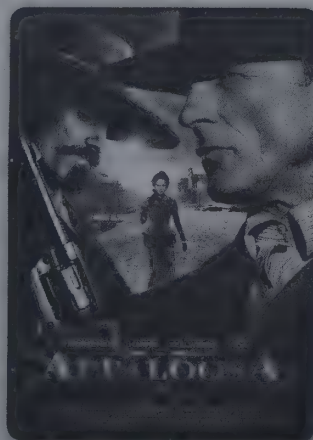
The article points out that TV fans usually get a bad rap on the tube — just think of Peter Griffin or Comic Book Guy. We TV fans are unhealthily obsessed with the perceived reality of other people's fantasies, and we pay for the experience of having no experiences. Actually, it does sound pretty sad.

I think it's okay to love TV. Just not the Emmys.

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MOVIE GUIDE WHAT'S PLAYING IN THE THEATRES

OPENING THIS WEEK

AMAL

Rupinder Nagra, Naseeruddin Shah, and Seema Biswas star in writer/director Richie Mehta's sentimental comedy about a poor autorickshaw driver in New Delhi who is unaware that an eccentric billionaire has left him his fortune... and that the billionaire's greedy relatives are determined to keep the cash within the family.

CHOKER

Sam Rockwell, Anjelica Huston, Kelly Macdonald, and Brad Pitt star in director Clark Gregg's adaptation of Chuck Palahniuk's novel about a man who devises an elaborate con that involves choking on his food at fancy restaurants, and then convincing the good Samaritans who rescue him to pay for his mother's nursing home bills.

DANGEROUS CROSSING

Jeanne Crain, Michael Rennie, and Max Showalter star in *This Island Earth* director Joseph Newman's 1953 thriller about a bride whose husband disappears without a trace during their honeymoon cruise — and who is then told by the crew that she boarded the ship alone. What then? *Royal Alberta Museum: Mon, Sept. 29 (8pm).*

EAGLE EYE

Shia Lebeouf, Michelle Monaghan, Rosario Dawson, and Billy Bob Thornton star in *Disturbia* director D.J. Caruso's paranoid thriller about two young strangers who go on the run when they are framed for crimes they didn't commit, and who are guided through increasingly dangerous situations by a mysterious woman who apparently is watching their every move.

EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

A cavalcade of documentaries, shorts, and features from across Canada and around the world. Notable titles include Jonathan Demme's *Rachel Getting Married*, Kevin Smith's *Zack and Miri Make a Porno*, James Marsh's *Man on Wire*, Bruce McDonald's *Pontypool*, and Sacha Gervasi's *Anvil! The Story of Anvil*. *Metro Cinema/City Centre 9: Sept 26-Oct 4*

THE LUCKY ONES

Tim Robbins, Rachel McAdams, and Michael Peña star in *The Illusionist* director Neil Burger's comedy/drama about three recently returned Iraq War veterans who bond during an eventful car trip from New York to Las Vegas.

MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA

Derek Luke, Michael Ealy, John Turturro, Kerry Washington, and John Leguizamo star in *Inside Man* director Spike Lee's World War II epic about four soldiers in an all-black battalion stationed in Tuscany who must find their way back to safety after getting trapped behind enemy lines.

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE

Richard Gere, Diane Lane, Christopher Meloni, and Viola Davis star in *Lackawanna Blues* director George C. Wolfe's romance about a

handsome doctor and an unhappily married woman who share a magical weekend as the only guests at a small inn on the storm-ravaged North Carolina coast. Based on the novel by Nicholas Sparks.

SHOOT ON SIGHT

Naseeruddin Shah, Brian Cox, Greta Scacchi, Om Puri, and Sadie Frost star in *Provoked: A True Story* director Jag Mundhra's crime drama, loosely inspired by the 2005 police shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes in a London subway, about a Muslim Scotland Yard officer who is assigned to track down a group of suspected suicide bombers.

ALSO PLAYING

BURN AFTER READING

After the sombre *No Country for Old Men*, the Coen brothers return to comedy with this tale of two none-too-bright gym employees trying to blackmail a retired CIA analyst. The camerawork, the performances, and the plotting are as meticulous as ever, but there's something heartless about the Coens' attitude toward the characters that make this a hard movie to warm up to.

★★★★☆

THE DARK KNIGHT

Muddled theme, incoherent action sequences, anticlimactic screenplay, ridiculous Batvoice... none of these flaws seem to matter to the fanboys, who've unanimously declared it a masterpiece. And despite its flaws, it's still an impressive piece of work, with a richness of character and incident that most comic-book movies never even attempt.

★★★★☆

FLY ME TO THE MOON

Even if Pixar hadn't already come out with *Wall-E* earlier this year, this computer-animated adventure about three houseflies stowing away on the Apollo 11 moon mission would still look unforgivably cheap and pedestrian. Your kids deserve much better than this.

★★★☆☆

THE HOUSE BUNNY

Someday Anna Faris will get a movie worthy of her considerable comic talents, but this dubious *Legally Blonde* retread ain't it. (We may adopt her character's trick for remembering people's names, though.)

★★★☆☆

IGOR

John Cusack provides the voice of a hunchback lab assistant with dreams of becoming a mad scientist himself in this modestly amusing computer-animated comedy. It ain't Pixar, but it's still a few notches above *Space Chimps* and *Fly Me to the Moon*.

★★★☆☆

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

Rotten to the core? No, not really; in fact, the worst thing you can say about this old-fashioned, kid-friendly 3D adventure is that it's merely forgettable.

★★★☆☆

LAKEVIEW TERRACE

If you weren't tired of Neil LaBute's predict-



Shia Versus CIA | Shia LeBeouf high-tails it down the streets of Washington in *Eagle Eye*. PHOTO SUPPLIED

ably misanthropic antics after *In the Company of Men*, *Your Friends and Neighbors*, and *The Shape of Things*, this race-baiting thriller starring Samuel L. Jackson ought to do the trick.

★★★☆☆

MAMMA MIA!

A deliberately tacky, amateurish big-screen version of the ABBA stage musical. Film-critic Napoleons: meet your "Waterloo."

★★★☆☆

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL

How does Dane Cook keep getting lead roles in romantic comedies? Here he is again, top-billed in an another completely charmless date movie; this time it's Kate Hudson who falls under his smug, douchebaggy spell.

★★★☆☆

RIGHTEOUS KILL

They never met in *The Godfather Part II*, and they met only briefly in *Heat* — and now Robert De Niro and Al Pacino finally get to share the screen for an entire movie. A dull, clichéd, entirely routine movie.

★★★☆☆

TROPIC THUNDER

Ben Stiller's first film as a director since *Zoolander* is another cult classic in the making. Robert Downey Jr. is amazing as a Method actor so committed to his craft that he dyes his skin black in order to play an African-American soldier, but Tom Cruise's extended cameo as a jaw-droppingly vulgar studio boss steals the film.

★★★★☆

VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA

Woody Allen's latest is no *Hannah and Her Sisters* (and Scarlett Johansson is no Mia Farrow), but as a breezy, sexy, pseudo-intellectual bit of travel-brochure fluff, you could do much, much worse.

★★★★☆

THE WOMEN

Diane English's film version of Clare Boothe Luce's all-female play explores the same basic territory as *Sex and the City*, but with a fraction of the sociological insight and none of the visual or verbal wit.

★★★☆☆

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Ben Lyons, ET

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Pat Collins,

WVOR-TV, NEW YORK

"EPIC"

Roger Ebert,

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

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BEYOND THE BLURBS • ALTERNATIVE CRITICS HAVE THEIR SAY



Chuck Amuck | Brad William Henke and Sam Rockwell share a tender moment in Chuck Palahniuk's *Choke*. PHOTO SUPPLIED

THIS WEEK: MORE CRITICS CHEW OVER *CHOKO*

Nick Pinkerton, *indieWIRE* | Let's say the least you expect of art is that it shows signs of ■ coherent designing intelligence, and the least you expect of entertainment is that it doesn't make you wish you were looking at something else. Now let's move on to *Choke*, which is neither. We're often exhorted not to preach to the choir, but what about blaspheming for unbelievers? This is the business of the 'provocation' industry, of which *Choke* is a typical prod-

uct. The religious material — at one point Victor's half-convicted that he's the product of insemination with a holy foreskin — is without the thrill or the trembling of apostasy. It's sacrilege as mere exhibitionism, a big screen *Piss Christ*, a raincoat perv exposing himself at a nudist's colony. This is why the comedy's so flat: the deviance is so omnipresent that it ceases to register as deviant. I remember anecdotes about Buñuel routinely stopping at a neighboring church to talk shop with the clergy — who could watch *Choke* and imagine Clark Gregg doing the same?*

Alison Willmore, *The IFC Blog* | *Choke*, the directorial debut of actor Clark Gregg and the second adaptation of one of Chuck Palahniuk's books, demonstrates that without an audacious filmmaker behind them, most of Palahniuk's ideas don't seem more remarkable than any in the average Sundance quirk-off. Not that *Choke* isn't amusing, salacious, and halfway touching, but its elements of working in a colonial-themed tourist attraction, pretending to choke in restaurants so that strangers will take an interest in you, and picking up women at sex-addition group meetings do blend into the 2008 Sun-

dance Festival's other offerings of abused agoraphobic porn addicts [*Good Dick*] and orphaned professional suicide note writers [*Last Word*].

David Edelstein, *New York* | *Choke*, from Chuck Palahniuk's typically overheated novel about a sex addict who blames his crazy mother, is the first movie chockablock with nude women I've ever fought to stay awake at. Sam Rockwell strips himself down to pure appetite and has a buoyant spirit. But the film sure doesn't. It's like Palahniuk translated into Robotech."

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GARNEAU
8717 - 109 STREET • 433-0728

VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA 14A
Highly 7:00, 9:00, Sat & Sun matinees 2:00.

PRINCESS 14A
10357 - 82 AVENUE • 433-0728

AMAL 14A
Highly 7:00, 9:00, Sat & Sun matinees 2:30. Coarse language.

SHOOT ON SIGHT 14A
Highly 6:50, 9:10, Sat & Sun matinees 2:00. Violence.

PARKLAND 14A
205 Main Street, Space Grove • 962-2322

EAGLE EYE 14A
Highly 6:50, 9:10, matinees Fri Sat Sun & Tues 1:15, 3:30.

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE 14A
Highly 7:05, 9:15. Movies for Mommies Tues 1:00; matinees Fri Sat Sun & Tues 12:55, 3:05.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 18A
Highly 7:15, 9:25, matinees Fri Sat Sun & Tues 12:55, 3:05. Coarse language, crude content.

IGOR 14A
Highly 6:45, 9:00, Fri Sat Sun & Tues 12:50, 3:00.

TROPIC THUNDER 14A
Highly 6:55, 9:10, matinees Fri Sat Sun & Tues 12:45, 3:10. Coarse language, crude content.

BURN AFTER READING 14A
Highly 7:00, 9:10, matinees Fri Sat Sun & Tues 1:05, 3:15. Violence, coarse language.

LAKEVIEW TERRACE 14A
Highly 7:00, 9:20, matinees Fri Sat Sun & Tues 1:10, 3:25. Coarse language.

METRO CINEMA 14A
1070-1014 AVENUE (OLD FASHION THEATRE) • 425-9212

SPANISH SHORTS 5TC
Sat 7:00

JUST BECAUSE I'M STANDING HERE DOESN'T MEAN I WANT TO 5TC
Sat 9:15

INTERNATIONAL FILM SHORTS 1 5TC
Mon 7:00

INTERNATIONAL FILM SHORTS 2 5TC
Mon 9:15

PRAIRIE TALES 10 5TC
Tues 9:15

GRANDIN THEATRE 14A
CARMAN HALL 301 WINDSTON CHURCHILL AVE. ST. ALBERT • 458-9072

DEATH RACE 14A
Daily 2:05, 9:10. Coarse language, crude content.

MAMMA MIA 14A
Daily 12:50, 2:50, 5:05

THE WOMEN 14A
Daily 1:05, 3:10, 5:20, 7:25

RIGHTOUS KILL 14A
Fri/Sun 7:30

BURN AFTER READING 14A
Daily 1:15, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15

EAGLE EYE 14A
Daily 12:45, 2:55, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20. No passes

IGOR 14A
Daily 1:00, 2:45, 4:25, 6:15, 7:55, 9:35

LEDUC CINEMAS 14A
470-555 St. Louis • 796-7720

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE 14A
Highly 7:00, 9:20, matinees Sat/Sun 1:10, 3:35. Mild sexual content and mild coarse language.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 18A
Highly 7:10, 9:35, matinees Sat/Sun 1:05, 3:25. Coarse language, crude content.

EAGLE EYE 14A
Highly 7:00, 9:25, matinees Sat/Sun 1:00, 3:30. Violence, coarse language.

LAKEVIEW TERRACE 14A
Highly 6:55, 9:20. Coarse language.

KUNG FU PANDA 14A
Matinees Sat/Sun 12:55, 3:05

WETASKIWIN CINEMA 4 PLEX 14A
3040-56 Wetaskiwin • 352-3722

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE 14A
Highly 7:00, 9:30, matinees Sat/Sun 1:10, 3:35. Coarse language.

DEATH RACE 14A
Highly 7:05, 9:25. Brutal violence, coarse language, gory scenes.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 18A
Highly 7:10, 9:35, matinees Sat/Sun 1:05, 3:25. Coarse language, crude content.

EAGLE EYE 14A
Highly 6:55, 9:20, matinees Sat/Sun 1:00, 3:30. Violence, coarse language.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH 14A
Highly 7:10, 9:30, matinees Sat/Sun 1:05, 3:25. Coarse language.

SOUTH EDMONTON 14A
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NIGHTS IN RODANTHE 14A
Folkies Wed/Thurs 12:30, 3:00, 6:40, 9:15; Tues 3:20, 6:40, 9:15. Star & Stripes Screening Tues 1:00.

EAGLE EYE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:30, 3:00, 6:40, 9:15. No passes.

MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA 14A
Fri/Sun 12:15, 3:30, 6:45, 10:10; Mon/Thurs 2:00, 6:30, 10:00. Coarse language, violence.

CHOKO 18A
Fri/Sun 7:10, 9:30, 12:50, 3:10. Sexual content.

IGOR 14A
Fri/Sun 12:20, 2:40, 4:50, 7:10, 9:20.

LAKEVIEW TERRACE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:00, 7:20, 9:40. Coarse language.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 18A
Fri/Sun 7:00, 9:20, 12:40. Coarse content, coarse language.

GHOST TOWN 14A
Fri/Sun 1:10, 3:30, 6:45, 9:15. Coarse language.

BURN AFTER READING 14A
Fri/Sun 12:50, 3:10, 6:30, 9:45, Tues 4:15, 7:00, 9:45. Star & Stripes Screening Tues 1:00. Coarse language, violence.

RIGHTOUS KILL 14A
Fri/Sun 1:40, 4:20, 7:20, 9:50. Violence, coarse language.

THE WOMEN 14A
Fri/Sun 12:00, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30. Not recommended for young children.

DEATH RACE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:40, 7:40, 10:15, Wed 4:40, 10:15. Gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence.

THE HOUSE BUNNY 14A
Fri/Sun 1:50. Not recommended for young children, coarse language.

FLY ME TO THE MOON 3-D 14A
Fri/Sun 12:15, 3:40, 6:45, 10:15. Mon/Kin, Tues 12:45, 4:45, 8:30. Wed 12:45, 4:40, 9:30. Frequenting scenes, not recommended for young children; violence.

THE DARK KNIGHT 14A
Fri/Sun 12:15, 3:40, 6:45, 10:15. Mon/Kin, Tues 12:45, 4:45, 8:30. Wed 12:45, 4:40, 9:30. Frequenting scenes, not recommended for young children; violence.

MAMMA MIA 14A
Fri/Sun 12:30, 3:15, 6:30, 9:10; Wed 12:30, 3:15, 7:00.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH 14A
Fri/Sun 12:30, 3:30. Not recommended for young children.

RENT FILMED LIVE ON BROADWAY 5TC
Wed/Thurs 8:50

FALL HD CONCERT SERIES — FROM THE BASEMENT SERIES 5TC
Wed 6:45, 9:30

NORTH EDMONTON
12231-137th Avenue • 752-7273

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE 14A
Fri/Sun, Wed/Thurs 12:30, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:15, Tues 5:20, 7:50, 10:15, Star & Stripes Screening Tues 1:00.

EAGLE EYE 14A
Fri/Sun 1:50, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30. No passes.

MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA 14A
Fri/Sun 2:10, 4:30, 10:00. Coarse language, violence.

LAKEVIEW TERRACE 14A
Fri/Sun 1:40, 4:40, 7:20, 10:10. Coarse language.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 18A
Fri/Sun 2:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:25. Coarse content, coarse language.

GHOST TOWN 14A
Fri/Sun 12:30, 2:40, 5:10, 7:30, 10:05. Coarse language, violence.

BURN AFTER READING 14A
Fri/Sun 12:20, 2:40, 5:10, 7:30, 10:05. Coarse language, violence.

RIGHTOUS KILL 14A
Fri/Sun 1:50, 2:15, 7:35, 9:50. Violence, coarse language.

THE WOMEN 14A
Fri/Sun 1:20, 3:40, 7:00, 9:40. Wed 1:00, 3:40, 7:00. Not recommended for young children.

DEATH RACE 14A
Fri/Sun 1:15. Gory scenes, coarse language, brutal violence.

TROPIC THUNDER 14A
Fri/Sun 1:30, 3:50, 6:00, 7:45, 10:20; Wed 1:30, 10:20. Coarse language, crude content.

THE DARK KNIGHT 14A
Fri/Sun 12:00, 3:20, 6:40, 9:55. Tues 12:00, 3:20, 9:55. Frequenting scenes, not recommended for young children; violence.

MAMMA MIA 14A
Fri/Sun 12:50, 3:20, 6:50.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:00, 7:10, 9:20. Sat/Sun 4:00, 7:10, 9:20. Not recommended for young children.

RENT FILMED LIVE ON BROADWAY 5TC
Sat/Sun 7:00.

FALL HD CONCERT SERIES — FROM THE BASEMENT SERIES 1 5TC
Wed 9:30

CITY CENTRE 9 CINEMAS 14A
3800 FIDELITY PHASE II, 101 or 8 102 AVE • 471-7070

LAKEVIEW TERRACE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:25, 3:25, 6:30, 9:15. Coarse language, violence.

RIGHTOUS KILL 14A
Fri/Sun 12:45, 3:45, 6:55, 9:20. Sat/Sun 6:55, 9:20, Wed 12:15, 3:25, 7:30. Violence, coarse language.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 18A
Fri/Sun 12:45, 4:10, 7:10, 10:00. Coarse content, coarse language.

GHOST TOWN 14A
Fri/Sun 12:45, 3:30, 6:55, 9:40. Wed 3:55, 6:45, 9:40, Star & Stripes Screening 1:00. Coarse language.

BURN AFTER READING 14A
Fri/Sun 1:00, 4:05, 7:35, 10:05. Coarse language, violence.

RIGHTOUS KILL 14A
Fri/Sun 1:30, 4:15, 7:10, 9:45. Violence, coarse language.

THE WOMEN 14A
Fri/Sun 12:30, 3:40, 6:35, 9:25. Tues 12:50, 3:40, 10:00. Not recommended for young children.

MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA 14A
Fri/Sun 12:00, 3:30, 6:45, 10:00. Coarse language, violence.

RENT FILMED LIVE ON BROADWAY 5TC
Fri/Sun 1:00

OPUS ARTS — CAVALLIERA RUSTICAN & PAGLIACCI (OPERA) 5TC
Fri/Sun 1:00

CLAREVIEW 10 CINEMAS 14A
4211-115TH AVENUE • 477-7600

BURN AFTER READING 14A
Fri/Sun 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 9:55, Sat/Sun 2:00, 4:30, 7:30, 9:55. Coarse language, violence.

RIGHTOUS KILL 14A
Fri/Sun 12:45, 4:15, 7:10, 9:30; Sat/Sun 1:25, 4:15, 7:10, 9:30. Violence, coarse language.

IGOR 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:40, 6:45, 9:15, Sat/Sun 12:50, 4:40, 6:45, 9:15.

LAKEVIEW TERRACE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:40, 6:45, 9:15, Sat/Sun 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:20. Coarse language.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 18A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:20, 9:50, Sat/Sun 1:40, 4:20, 7:20, 9:50. Coarse content, coarse language.

GHOST TOWN 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:25, 7:25, 9:45, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:25, 7:25, 9:45. Coarse language.

THE LUCKY ONES 5TC
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45.

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45.

EAGLE EYE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45.

EAGLE EYE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 9:45.

WESTMOUNT CENTRE CINEMAS 14A
111 AVENUE & GORDON RD • 455-8726

EAGLE EYE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:25, Sat/Sun 12:40, 3:30, 6:40, 9:25.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 18A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:25, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:25.

MAMMA MIA 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:25, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:25.

BURN AFTER READING 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:25, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:25.

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:25, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:25.

SCOTIABANK THEATRE 14A
WEST EDMONTON HALL • 888-120 STREET • 444-7400

NIGHTS IN RODANTHE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 4:20, 7:25, Sat/Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:25.

EAGLE EYE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:40, 3:30, 7:30, 10:15, Fri/Sun 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 9:45.

IGOR 14A
Fri/Sun 12:20, 3:00, 6:40, 9:10.

LAKEVIEW TERRACE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:50, 3:45, 6:55, 9:35. Coarse language.

MY BEST FRIEND'S GIRL 18A
Fri/Sun 12:45, 4:10, 7:10, 10:00. Coarse content, coarse language.

GHOST TOWN 14A
Fri/Sun 12:45, 3:30, 6:55, 9:40. Wed 3:55, 6:45, 9:40, Star & Stripes Screening 1:00. Coarse language.

BURN AFTER READING 14A
Fri/Sun 1:00, 4:05, 7:35, 10:05. Coarse language, violence.

RIGHTOUS KILL 14A
Fri/Sun 1:30, 4:15, 7:10, 9:45. Violence, coarse language.

THE WOMEN 14A
Fri/Sun 12:30, 3:40, 6:35, 9:25. Tues 12:50, 3:40, 10:00. Not recommended for young children.

DEATH RACE 14A
Fri/Sun 12:45, 3:40, 6:40, 9:40. Wed 3:55, 6:45, 9:40, Star & Stripes Screening 1:00. Coarse language, brutal violence.

TROPIC THUNDER 14A
Fri/Sun 12:35, 3:35, 6:40, 9:50, Wed 12:35, 3:35, 9:50. Coarse language, crude content.

THE DARK KNIGHT 14A
Fri/Sun 12:15, 3:30, 6:50, 10:10. Mon/Thurs 1:10, 4:30, 8:00. Frequenting scenes, not recommended for young children; violence.

CINEMA CITY MOVIES 12
1250 AVENUE & 50 STREET • 472-9179

HASHISH: A LOVE STORY (PUNJABI W/L.S.T.) 5TC
Fri/Sun 1:00, 4:30, 8:30.

COLLEGE 18A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

THE ROCKER 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

MIRKOS 18A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

THE MUMMY: TOMB OF THE DRAGON EMPEROR 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

SPACE CHIMPS 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

HELLBOY II: THE GOLDEN ARMY 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

HAMCOCK 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

WANTED 18A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

GET SMART 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

KUNG FU PANDA 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

SEX AND THE CITY 18A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: PRINCE CASPIAN 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

IRON MAN 14A
Fri/Sat 10:05, 12:20, Sun/Thurs 10:05. Coarse content, coarse language.

GALAXY CINEMAS 14A
2075 SHEPPARD DR. SHEPPARD PARK • 416-9150

“ I WORK REALLY HARD AT MAKING MY DIALOGUE AUTHENTIC. IF THAT MEANS LOTS OF PAUSES AND ELLIPSES, I'M OKAY WITH THAT.

BOOKS • CANLIT SUPERSTAR • BY MICHAEL HINGSTON / 789 words

This Is The Toews I Know, I Know

MIRIAM TOEWS SOARS BACK INTO BOOKSTORES WITH THE SERIOCOMIC ROAD NOVEL *THE FLYING TROUTMANS*

THE FLYING TROUTMANS

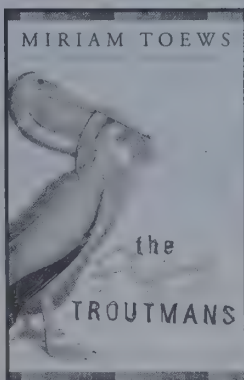
By Miriam Toews. Knopf Canada. 288 pp. \$32

Halfway through my interview with Miriam Toews, sitting on a café patio overlooking Churchill Square, her eyes suddenly lock onto something over my shoulder, and her voice trails off. Then she breaks into a huge, involuntary smile and stands up. “Oh my God,” she whispers. “Holy shit!”

Walking towards us, it turns out, is a friend of Toews’ from many years back who now lives in Edmonton. They hug, excitedly ask how each other’s family is doing, and Toews brings up an old black-and-white photo of them that she still has on her mantel at home in Winnipeg; they’re standing in front of a beat-up VW van, their kids all knee-high, their faces enviably wrinkle-free. (This last bit is mostly bravado: Toews is 44, but could easily pass for 28.) It’s a time Toews looks back on fondly: “When we got out of bed and nothing ached — we jumped out of bed!”

This story, which takes her all of 10 seconds to tell, is charming, and direct, and told with real warmth. It makes everyone involved grin, partly because Toews makes no attempt to downplay its potential cheesiness. In short, it’s exactly the kind of anecdote that abounds in her winning new book, *The Flying Troutmans*.

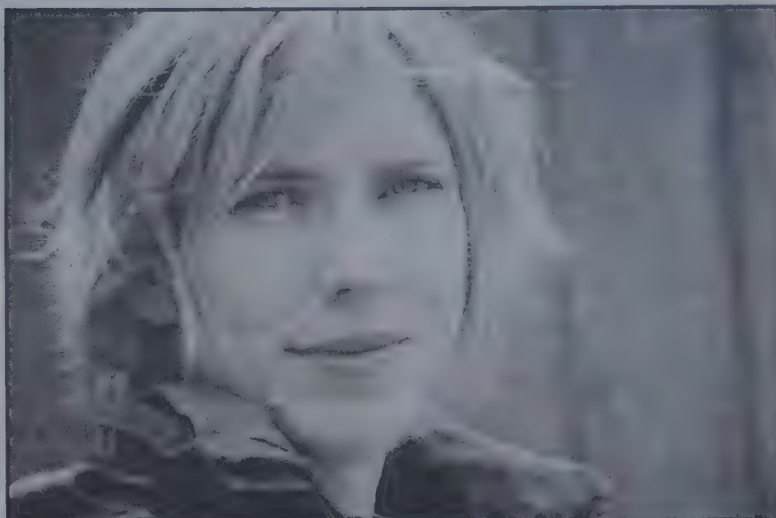
While ostensibly a road-trip novel, *The Flying Troutmans* is really about the strange and strangely unbreakable bonds between family. The book opens with a woman named Hattie receiving a phone call from



her frantic 11-year-old niece Thebes, who tells her that her mom is in the throes of another psychotic episode, her older brother Logan is flunking out of school, and would she mind getting on the first plane from Paris to Winnipeg and making everything better? Hattie, of course, rushes to the scene, and once her sister Min is safely checked into a hospital for treatment, she loads the kids into the family’s Ford Aerostar and — in an effort to distract them as well as find a replacement parent that isn’t her — sets off south to track down their long-absent father.

In person, Toews is an engaging and instantly lovable figure, and never more so than when talking about her characters, whom she describes with as much care as she does her real children. As you might expect, one of her biggest concerns is making sure that the Troutmans seem true to life.

“I don’t want my dialogue — or the story, period — to be heavy-handed or remotely contrived,” she says. “My characters are often defined by



Her Latest Book Is Flying Off The Shelves | *The Flying Troutmans* is Miriam Toews’ follow-up to *A Complicated Kindness*. PHOTO COURTESY OF RANDOM HOUSE CANADA

their dialogue, and I work really hard at making it authentic. If that means lots of pauses and ellipses, and just ordinary, awkward dialogue that people have, I’m okay with that.”

In addition to her novels, Toews has contributed to PRI’s *This American Life* and had a well-received role in the 2007 film *Silent Light* (whose director, Carlos Reygadas, intentionally casts non-actors). Aside from paying the bills, she says that telling stories is simply how she makes sense of the world.

So what conclusions has she drawn so far?

“Oh, none,” she says, “other than the fact that we’re all alone, and needy, and often alienated from each other and our thoughts. I mean, the world is an awkward, tragic, painful, hard place for so many people so

much of the time ... and then there are moments of great beauty, great clarity, great connection, splendour, and grace.”

I mention that that’s quite a bleak outlook for someone who’s won humour awards, and she laughs. “That’s where the humour comes from, a lot of the time,” she adds.

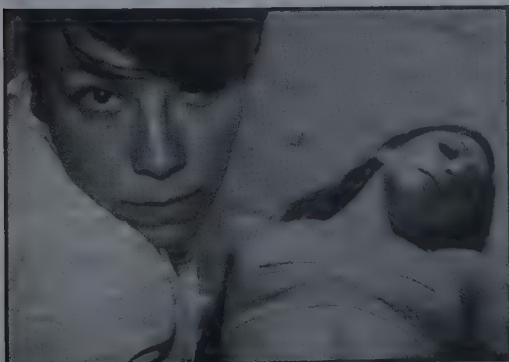
Not that her readers need convincing of her abilities. Toews’ previous novel, 2004’s *A Complicated Kindness*, won the Governor General’s Award and the 2006 Canada Reads competition, and can still be found in many a bookstore’s staff picks section. *The Flying Troutmans* seems poised to continue that winning streak — it’s been number one on the Canadian fiction charts since its release earlier this month.

Despite her conquest of the Cana-

dian literary scene, however, Toews is still seen as something of an unknown property in other countries. (A recent interview on the high-profile American literary blog Bookslut was done as part of their “Indie Heartthrob” series.) She’s on a smaller, independent press in the United States, and her upcoming tour there will be much more low-key than the 10-city, cross-country jaunt she’s just completed here.

Still, being an up-and-comer may have its advantages. When I confess that before I read *The Flying Troutmans*, I assumed Toews would be a bad writer simply because of how popular she is, she nods with understanding.

“See, I get that,” she says. “And that concerns me. That would be exactly my reaction too.”



Pretty Girls Make Graves | Nadien Chu and Melissa Thingstad stare into the black heart of the Bosnian conflict in *Body of a Woman*, the inaugural production of Indie’s 2008/2009 season. PHOTO SUPPLIED

ARTS NEWS • NOTABLE HAPPENINGS FROM THE GALLERY TO THE BOOKSTORE

POLITICAL THEATRE!

Disposing Of A Body

Arrgh! Our recent 2008/09 season preview wasn’t as complete as we thought. Indie5, the loosely affiliated band of local theatre troupes, unveiled their upcoming third season of challenging drama this Tuesday. Among the attractions: ribbitREpublic’s *Grimmer Than Grimm*, and Beth Graham’s new show *A Life in the Day*. But the production that concerns us this week is *Body of a Woman* (TransAlta Arts Barns, Sept. 25-Oct. 4), an intense play by Romania’s Matei Visniec about two women affected by the Bosnian conflict. Melissa Thingstad is a rape victim, Nadien Chu is an American psychiatrist.

YOU KNOW...FOR KIDS!

Kaleido Widens Its Scope

Radiant, the series of paintings which Jennifer Berkenbosch has affixed to many of our more decrepit buildings, are already part of EDMONTON: Explored, the oddly capitalized AGA exhibition which gets discussed in this week’s Art Box. (Think of them as a cross between graffiti and stick-on decals.) Starting Friday, Berkenbosch’s work will also be on display at the Alberta Avenue Business Association (11770-95 St.) as part of the **Kaleido Family Arts Festival** (Sept. 26-28). But kids have more to do here than just stare at some paintings — there’s a pancake breakfast, carnival games, and live music.

GRIPES AND GRUMBLES!

All Giller, No Filler?

The longest for the **Giller Prize** was announced last week, and the carping about the jury’s choices are well underway on the Canadian book blog Bookninja. The main gripes: (1) only three of the 15 nominated books are by women; (2) short fiction is underrepresented, with only two nominees; (3) arguably only Marina Endicott’s *Good to a Fault* comes from a small/independent press; and (4) why the hell didn’t Lee Henderson get nominated for *The Man Game*? While we’re talking snubs, Arts News has to ask, where’s the love for our gal Miriam Toews and *The Flying Troutmans*?

EDMONTON: Explored: Explored



**ART BOX MANDY ESPEZEL & JILL STANTON
GRAFFITI IN THE GALLERY
WORKS BETTER THAN FINE
ART IN RUN-DOWN NEIGHBOURHOODS AT ACA GROUP SHOW**

This week brought Jill and Mandy back to the Art Gallery of Alberta in order to properly experience fellow Edmontonian Amy Fung's curatorial debut *EDMONTON: Explored*.

Mandy: *EDMONTON: Explored* is nothing if not ■ very earnest attempt at discovering and presenting our community with an opportunity for self-reflection. The exhibit contains work by seven local artists and activists: Jennifer Berkenbosch, Ted Kerr, Clay Lowe, Ian Mulder, aAr-munson, Mark Templeton, and Monica Pitre. The works are incredibly varied in medium, ranging from enlarged Polaroids to installations to photocollage. All the work investigates the people and realities of Edmonton as a unifying theme. What did you think of it, Jill?

Jill: I really, really get the importance of an exhibit like this. The idea that each city has its own individuality is a really interesting notion (although not a new one), and one that is ripe for discussion, investiga-

tion, and commentary. Edmonton is a dynamic city, home to numerous populations, backgrounds, and futures. Of course! And I think it's great that we're trying to question our own identities as Edmontonians. I repeat: the concept of *EDMONTON: Explored* is stellar. However, I'm thinking this might be where my gushing praise ends. The problem with the exhibit, specifically, lies not so much in the themes that each artist is wrestling with (identity, place, graffiti, public vs. private spaces), but rather the scope of the show. It's pretty easy to make a blanket comment on graffiti or the inner city when you haven't lived within it. What am I trying to say, Mandy?

Mandy: The issue of being a commentator, rather than speaking from experience, is a slippery place to be. But I don't know the artists in this exhibition personally, so I really don't know their own experiences. Nor should that be relevant, I think, to their ability to question issues that affect all the people in this community.

Jill: Okay, okay. That's pretty fair. I think that the things that I found most problematic about the show are not necessarily the images themselves, or how the artists were talking about them, but rather how some of them felt they were making "pretty" images for the people in "those" neighbourhoods. Do you know what I mean? I think I felt this way most strongly about Jennifer Berkenbosch's *Radiant City I*



Billboards in Browntown | Monica Pitre's large-scale outdoor installation at *EDMONTON: Explored* goes ignored by passersby. PHOTO BY STEVEN TEELUNSEN

& II. As beautifully executed as the images themselves were, I couldn't help but think that it was missing the point on all angles. This piece wasn't talking about Edmonton in any way other than the fact that the artist has a some kind of connection to the city, and she glued her drawings onto an Edmonton building in order to specifically take photos of it for this show, and let people see it in the Gallery.

Mandy: I see what you mean. Monica Pitre's subversive billboards, which she installed in some rundown areas of town, had some potential: taking ■ venue designed for hideous advertising and trying to transform it into a venue for expression is a hopeful gesture to me. But do we think that the people who lived within the vicinity of these installations

were affected by them? Were their lives enriched? The picture used for displaying the work in the exhibition shows a woman walking underneath the billboard, completely unaware of its existence. The written commentary accompanying the picture even mentions her indifference. Is it naive to think anyone outside the artistic realm really took note?

Jill: On a positive note, though, I thought that Ian Mulder and Clay Lowe's piece on the nature and nurture of Edmonton graffiti was quite interesting, albeit a little bit amateurish in execution (as were all of the installation-based works in the show, unfortunately). The work has a lot of potential to visually explain the state of graffiti in our fair city. The pair took what was originally a full-blown reproduction of ■ piece

of graffiti on a city brick wall, and then up the commentative value of the image by painting over it with grey house paint, as per Edmonton Graffiti Removal Bylaws, live at the opening of the show. I'm thinking that's pretty smart.

Mandy: That performance element was the strongest element of the whole exhibit. A very retro approach — I'm disappointed I didn't get to see it. But the message it was trying to communicate is definitely still present and open for discussion. We, however, have used up all our allotted space, and are now in danger of encroaching on the always-present advertising.

EDMONTON: Explored will be on display at the Art Gallery of Alberta until Nov. 2.

THEATRE PREVIEW · STAGE SEQUEL · BY RENATO PAGNANI | 468 words

Time For A Game Of Godot Cop, Bad Cop

JAMES HAMILTON AND COLLIN DOYLE HAUL BECKETT'S TITLE CHARACTER IN FOR QUESTIONING IN ALIAS GODOT

ALIAS GODOT

Directed by Bradley Moss. Written by Brendan Gall. Starring Julien Arnold, Brian Doyle, Collin Doyle, James Hamilton, and Christopher Schulz. *The Roxy* (10708-124th St). Tickets available at the Roxy box office (453-2440).

After local actor James Hamilton read Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* for the first time in college, he was left with more questions than answers.

"I didn't get it," he laughs. "I had an absolute blast reading it, and I knew that Beckett was getting at something really substantial and important in the piece, but it was a little over my head at the time."

He wasn't alone in his limited understanding of the 1953 classic — fellow thespian Collin Doyle wasn't sure what the absurdist play was

about either.

"I enjoyed it, though," he says. "It definitely makes you think, and that's what any good piece of theatre does. What I liked about it was that it was so open that in the end, you decide what it's about. For some, its ambiguity is its greatest weakness, but for me, that's the play's greatest strength."

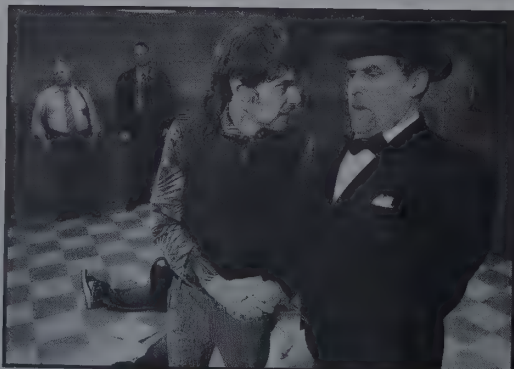
That ambiguity is what allowed Toronto playwright Brendan Gall to write a sequel of sorts to Beckett's play entitled *Alias Godot*, in which both Hamilton and Doyle are preparing to appear in as the production makes its local debut this week.

Waiting for Godot centres around two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, as they wait expectantly (and unsuccessfully) for someone named Godot to arrive. *Alias Godot* attempts to tell the other side of the story, imagining why Godot was never able to make his rendezvous. In Gall's version, Godot was held up

in an interrogation room by two corrupt cops from a New York-like city who think this odd foreigner might have something to do with their investigation into a recent crime. Hamilton and Doyle play Rocko and Linus, two agents from the Domestic Terrorism Unit, who evoke memories of Lucky and Pozzo from Beckett's play.

While Rocko, Linus and the other characters recall figures from *Waiting for Godot*, Hamilton stresses that this production's main goal is ensuring the people onstage are believable outside the context of Beckett's original.

"These characters are different enough in style and personality from the characters in Beckett's play that we don't have to worry too much about emulating some equivalent character from *Waiting for Godot*," Doyle explains. "That's what Gall did so well when he wrote this play; he wrote these characters in such a way



See You Later, Interrogator | James Hamilton gives Julien Arnold the third degree in *Alias Godot*. PHOTO BY IAN JACKSON

that they could exist even if *Waiting for Godot* never did."

"We talked about *Waiting for Godot* a little bit when we first all got together," Hamilton says, "but we're not really concerned with it too much. *Alias Godot* has to be able

to live on its own for the people who don't know the original Beckett play. If you have no idea what a Godot even is, it's still a very good play. For those who know and love Beckett's play, I think that *Alias* only enhances the original."

THEATRE REVIEW • ALL-TIME CLASSIC • BY MICHAEL HINGSTON | 601 words

Hungry For The Woolf



Approximately Eighteen Sheets To The Wind | Linda Quibell's Martha may be soused, but her wit is still sharp in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* PHOTO COURTESY OF STUDIO THEATRE

THREE HOURS OF BITCHY DIALOGUE? THIS VERSION OF ALBEE'S MASTERPIECE MAKES IT ALL GO DOWN EASY

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?

Directed by Rob Moffatt. Written by Edward Albee. Starring David Ley, Linda Quibell, Eric Nyland, Ava Marcus. Timms Centre for the Arts (University of Alberta). To Sept. 27. Tickets: 420-1757/www.tixonthesquare.ca.

★★★★★

Most people who care about theatre know that Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is one of the most highly regarded plays of the 20th century, even if they've never seen it performed. They'll also probably know that it's fuelled by some of the most brutal (and brutally funny) dialogue ever spoken by a group of WASP-y academics. But what they may not realize — as I didn't, until the usher kindly informed me on my way inside the Timms Centre — is that it's also three hours long, not counting intermissions.

But as director and MFA candidate Rob Moffatt's superb production demonstrates, with swagger and panache to spare, 180 minutes isn't really that long at all — not for two couples to drunkenly reduce each other to absolute rubble, ruining reputations and preying on every available weakness. It's a spectacular display of mass character assassination, and Moffatt gives it the epic proportions it deserves.

Martha and George (Linda Quibell and U of A acting professor David Ley) are mainstays at a middlebrow New England college, he a history professor and she the president's daughter. They return home from a dull faculty party late one night, tipsy and irritable, and within two minutes they're locked into a heated argument over the name of an old Bette Davis film (which, by the way, instantly shows the play's age — a quick search on IMDb might've prevented all of the ensuing ugliness).

George is ready to sleep the gin off as soon as he walks into the house, but Bette Davis is only the beginning of his headache, as Martha reveals

she's invited the cute new professor (Eric Nyland) and his mousy, "slim-hipped" wife (Ava Marcus) over for a nightcap. Despite the latter couple's best intentions, they're quickly sucked into the sinkhole of loathing and contempt that George and Martha call home.

The bite and jump in Albee's script could make even the most awkward actor seem menacing, but Moffatt has a crack team of performers at his disposal, who are able to spit venom in the smallest glances and pauses. Martha jokingly refers to herself as the Earth Mother, but the way Quibell stomps around the stage and demands various characters to make her a drink, it's not much of a stretch to imagine her commanding the elements as well.

Nyland and Marcus are both great, too, and their gradual slide into vulgarity is perhaps the play's most tragic move — though the readiness with which Nyland's Nick begins to fantasize about sleeping his way to the top of the administration (beginning with Martha) is a good indicator that his clean image would have eventually sullied itself anyway.

But it's Ley's George that really turns the production into the powerhouse Albee intended it to be. The humiliating "games" he forces on his guests seem to come from a place of true repulsion, but he also fumes and sulks with immense purpose, and even seems in control of things when near tears or hurtling books at his door chimes. In fact, he's so propulsive that he's almost unconvincing as a lowly associate professor crushed under a glass ceiling. If George brought half the withering wit and penchant for blackmail on display here to the campus, he'd surely have a building named after him by the end of the day.

This is a terrific production of an essential piece of theatre, but whatever you do, don't try and memorize your favourite zinger to tell your friends about afterward; your head will be spinning, overloaded with options, well before the first intermission.

THEATRE REVIEW • ONE-WOMAN SHOW • BY KATHLEEN BELL | 410 words

Undead Poet Terrorizes Edmonton!

GWENDOLYN MACEWEN HAUNTS THEATRE, SWILLS BOOZE, DECLAINS POEMS IN ALIEN CREATURE

ALIEN CREATURE: A VISITATION FROM GWENDOLYN MACEWEN

Directed by Laura Raboud and Fawnda Mithrushi. Written by Linda Griffiths. Starring Laurissa Kalinowsky. The Living Room Playhouse (1133-106 Ave). To Oct 5.

★★★★☆

I witnessed a visitation from a dead poet on Sunday. It was my first visitation, and I don't think you can beat a feisty female alcoholic with an enduring love of Wonder Woman for your first experience with a spirit.

With the one-woman show *Alien Creature*, the intimate confines of The Living Room Playhouse become the site of a point-blank encounter with Gwendolyn MacEwen, the Canadian poet and world-class alcoholic who wrote 26 books and won two Governor General's Awards before dying at the age of 46. Now it's Laurissa Kalinowsky who is haunted by death as she plays MacEwen, an apparition troubled by her own in-

ability to stop writing and rhyming, the world's underappreciation of the arts, and the once-wild women who have resigned and are now hiding in power suits.

Kalinowsky's portrayal of MacEwen is charming and funny, especially when she's swearing revenge those who keep artists living in basements or trying her best to stop speaking in couplets. The play

thereof, also clears the canvas for some flashes of magic and a little snazzy sleight of hand — at one point, Kalinowsky turns a bubble into a marble and throws it to the ground with a clang. I'm still trying to figure that one out.

When my wee brain wasn't busy marveling at the magic show, it was kept plenty busy catching up on the dialogue. Linda Griffiths' script incorporates some of MacEwen's poetry, and while I'm not exactly thrilled to admit it in print, I can lose my place in a poem pretty easily. Therefore, people with a similar condition, we rhyme-challenged types, might need to attend a second showing to understand the full weight of MacEwen's words.

There's a moment in the play when Kalinowsky slyly confesses, "I love living inside this mind." I figure the interior of anyone's mind is a confusing place to be, but I suspect MacEwen's artsy-alcoholic brain is a touch more tortured and twisted than most. That said, it's also an intriguing place to explore for an hour and a half.

I WITNESSED A VISITATION FROM A DEAD POET ON SUNDAY!

makes smart use of the tiny theatre space, and Kalinowsky engages with every nook and cranny, sweetly reminiscing in one corner, and swilling a mickey in another. There's even a little crowd participation.

As Kalinowsky crawls about the stage, the lighting provides the only companion to her story, lifting and lowering, helping to create a warm embrace or a ghoulish glow as necessary. It's neat. The light, or lack

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EXHIBITS

ALLUSIONS STUDIO GALLERY, 11 PERROW ST., ST. ALBERT, OCT 4-NOV 1 A solo exhibition by Douglas Fraser. Info: the-studio-gallery@telusplanet.net/www.douglasfraser.ca

BRIGHT STROKES U OF A MUSEUM GALLERY A, 87 AVE. AND 11TH ST., SEP 18-JAN 24 Chinese paintings from the Macatagart Art Collection.

BUILDING MY HOUSE LATITUDE 53, 10248 106TH ST., SEP 20-OCT 18 Hand printed panels by Rebekah Miller focusing on the concept of the dream house. Info: www.latitude53.org

[CAW] 1 HARDCOURT HOUSE GALLERY 3RD FL., 10275 112TH ST., SEP 12-OCT 17 Snapshots by Shantael Slight capturing a day in the life of a cow. Info: www.harcourt.house.ab.ca/780-426-4150

DESIGN FOR A DIALOGUE LATITUDE 53, 10248 106TH ST., SEP 20-OCT 18 Works by Flutura and Benik Hachitani. Info: www.latitude53.org

ELECTRIC STUDIO GALLERY, 143 GRANDIN PARK PLAZA, 225 SR WINSTON CHURCHILL AVE., ST. ALBERT, SEP 13 A collection of fruit portraits focusing on colour and texture by Chris Riley. Info: 780-460-5990

EDMONTON EXPLORED ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA, ENTERPRISE SQUARE, #100 10230 JASPER AVE., SEP 6-NOV 2 A collection of works addressing the nature of graffiti. Curated by Amy Fung, Works by Jennifer Berkenbosch, Ted Kier, Clay Lowe and others. Info: www.artgalleryofalberta.ca/780-426-6223

EDMONTON PRINTS RED STRAP MARKET, 103 AVE. 97TH ST., SEP 27-OCT 17 A curated exhibition celebrating the experimental nature of print related art in conjunction with EPI 2008. Info: www.snapartists.com

EPI 2008 CAPITAL ARTS BUILDING, 10708 105TH ST. & SNAP GALLERIES, 10309 97TH ST., SEP 26-OCT 17 The largest, most comprehensive show of prints in Western Canada. Info: www.snapartists.com

FLORESCENCE ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL, 10186 106TH ST., SEP 6-OCT 18 New work by ceramic artist Candice Ring. Info: www.albertacraft.ab.ca/780-488-6611

IMPRESSION ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA, ENTERPRISE SQUARE, #100 10230 JASPER AVE., SEP 4-NOV 2 Highlights from the AGA's collection of prints, dating from the 18th century to the present day. Info: www.artgalleryofalberta.ca/780-426-6223

MANABOZO SUN AND MOON VISIONARIES GALLERY AND STUDIO, 12225 107TH AVE., SEP 12-OCT 31 The trickster rabbit. A series of canvases and carvings by Jason Carter. Info: www.sunandmoongallery.com

THE SWIMMERS HARDCOURT HOUSE GALLERY, 3RD FL., 10275 112TH ST., SEP 12-OCT 17 A video installation by Christophe Iliwa portraying disabled and able-bodied swimmers in a Montreal pool. Info: www.harcourt.house.ab.ca/780-426-4150

UP THE CREEK ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL, 10186 106TH ST., OCT 4-DEC 20 Ceramic and glass works inspired by the Red Deer River by Brian McArthur and Darren J. Petersen. Info: www.albertacraft.ab.ca/780-488-6611 ext. 221

WORKS OF A RENAISSANCE MASTER: THE PRINTS OF ALBRECHT DÜRER ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA, ENTERPRISE SQUARE, #100 10230 JASPER AVE., SEP 4-NOV 2 Rarely exhibited works spanning Dürer's career as a leading printmaker in the Renaissance. Info: www.artgalleryofalberta.ca/780-426-6223

berta/780-426-6223.

GALLERIES

ALBERTA CRAFT COUNCIL, 10186 106TH ST. Info: www.albertacraft.ab.ca/780-488-6611 EXT 221

A.J. OTTEWELL ARTS CENTRE 590 BROADMOOR BLVD., SHERWOOD PARK, INFO: 780-449-4443

THE ARTERY 9535 ASPER AVE. Hours: Thu 5-7 p.m. or by appointment. Info: theartery@nolab.ca

ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA ENTERPRISE SQUARE, #100, 10230 JASPER AVE. Hours: Mon-Fri 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thu 4-8 a.m.; Sat & Sun 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Info: www.artgalleryofalberta.com/780-426-6223

ARTSHAB GALLERY 3RD FL., 10271 106TH ST. Hours: Thu 5-8 p.m. or by appointment. Info: www.artshab.com/780-439-9532

BEARCLAW GALLERY 10403 124TH ST., 780-482-1204. Info: bearclawgallery.com

BLUE CURVE GALLERY GLENROSE REHABILITATION HOSPITAL, 10230 111TH AVE. Hours: Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

CABINET GALLERY NOKOMIS CLOTHING, 10318 82ND AVE. Info: www.stillatopgarden.ca

THE CARROT COMMUNITY ARTS COFFEE HOUSE 9351 118TH AVE. Info: www.theartrot.ca/780-471-1580

CENTRE D'ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA 9103 95TH AVE. Info: 780-431-3427

CHRISTIE BERGSTROM'S RED GALLERY 9621 82ND AVE. Hours: Mon-Fri, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. "Mother and Child" by Christ Bergstrom. Info: 780-439-8210

DOUGLAS UDELL GALLERY 10332 124 ST. Hours: Tue-Fri, 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Info: www.douglasudellgallery.com/780-488-4445

ELECTRUM DESIGN STUDIO 12419 STONY PLAIN RD. New works from various artists. Info: www.waynemackenziegoldsmiths.com/780-482-1402

EXTENSION CENTRE GALLERY MAIN FLOOR ATRIUM, ENTERPRISE SQUARE, 10230 JASPER AVE. Hours: Daily 7 a.m.-11 p.m. Info: www.extensionvalberta.ca

FAB GALLERY 1 FINE ARTS BUILDING, U OF A CAMPUS. Hours: Tue-Fri, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat, 2-5 p.m. Info: 780-492-3261

FRINGE GALLERY 10516 WHYTE AVE. Info: www.paintspat.ca/780-432-0240

FRONT GALLERY 12312 JASPER AVE. Info: 780-488-2952

GALLERY AT MILNER STANLEY A MILNER LIBRARY, #7 CHURCHILL SQUARE. Info: 780-496-7030

HARCOURT HOUSE GALLERY 3RD FL., 10275 112TH ST. Info: www.harcourthouse.ab.ca

JEFF ALLEN GALLERY STRATHCONA SENIORS CENTRE, 10831 UNIVERSITY AVE. Hours: Mon, Thu, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Info: 780-433-5807

JOHNSON GALLERY 771 8TH ST. Edmonton oil painters working in-studio throughout the season. Info: www.susanabma.com/780-465-6711

LANDO GALLERY 1130 105 AVE. Hours: Mon-Fri, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sat, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Info: www.landogallery.com/780-990-1161

LATITUDE 53 10248 106TH ST. Hours: Tue-Fri, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat, 12-5 p.m. Info: www.latitude53.org/780-423-5553

MACEWAN CENTRE FOR THE ARTS 10045 156TH ST. Hours: Mon-Fri, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sat, Sun, 12-5 p.m. Info: 780-479-4050

MCMULLEN GALLERY 8440 112TH ST., U OF A HOSPITAL. Hours: Mon-Fri, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Sat-Sun, noon-6 p.m. Free admission. Info: 780-407-752

NINA HAGGETT CENTRE 9704 111TH AVE. Hours: Mon-Fri, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Hours: Mon/Wed/Fri, 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; Tue/Thu, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. & 5-8 p.m. Info: www.ninahaggettyart.ca/780-474-7611

NORTH EDMONTON SCULPTURE WORKSHOP 10546 115TH ST. Daytime viewing by appointment call 780-482-2685

OUT OF THE FIRE STUDIO 12214 JASPER AVE. Info: www.outofthefirestudio.com/780-378-0240

PETER ROBERTSON GALLERY 10183 112TH ST. Hours: Tue-Sat, 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Info: www.probertsongallery.com/780-455-7479

PICTURE THIS GALLERY 959 ORDEZ RD. SHERWOOD PARK. Info: www.picturethisgallery.com/780-467-3038

PLANET ZE DESIGN CENTRE 10055 80TH AVE. Ongoing displays include functional sculpture and jewelry by Sandra Sing Fernandes, metal sculpture by Linda Mannes and Bianca Khan, and paintings by Quentin Maki and Tim Rechner. Info: www.planetze.com

PORTAL GALLERY #300, 9414 91ST ST. Hours: Tue-Fri, 12-8 p.m.; Sat, 12-7 p.m. Info: www.theportalgallery.com

PROFILES PUBLIC ART GALLERY 19 PERROW ST., ST. ALBERT. Info: 780-460-4310

ROWLES & CO. LTD. MEZZANINE LEVEL, 10130 103RD ST. Info: www.rowles.ca/780-426-4035

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LOYAL EDMONTON REGIMENT MILITARY MUSEUM #118, PRINCE OF WALES ARMOURIES HERITAGE CENTRE, 10440 108TH AVE. Hours: Mon-Fri, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

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CATS JUBILEE AUDITORIUM, 11455 87 AVE., SEP 30-OCT 5 Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's feline musical makes another Edmonton stop. Info: www.jubileeauditorium.com/ticketmaster.ca

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE SHOCKT THEATRE, THE CITADEL, 9828 101A AVE., SEP 20-OCT 12, 7:30 P.M. Bob Baker directs Lilly Cadeau, James MacDonald and Tom Wood in Tom Wood's new stage version of Jane Austen's classic novel. Info: www.citadeltheatre.com

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? TIMMS CENTRE FOR THE ARTS (OFFICE OF ALBERTA), SEP 18-27, 7:30 P.M. Bob Moffat directs Edward Albee's classic play about one very long night in the lives of a history professor, his hard-nosed wife, and the young couple they invite to their home. Info: www.studioteatre.ca or call 780-492-870

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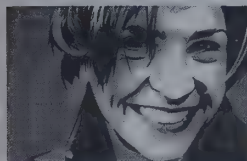
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You Know What They Say About Pens And Company Ink...



**MY MESSY BEDROOM JOSEY VOGELS
SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS A
WORKPLACE REALITY, BUT
SHOULD OFFICE ROMANCES BE
BANNED OUTRIGHT?**

I've never slept with my boss. Though, when I was 18 and volunteering on a kibbutz in Israel, the volunteer coordinator (technically, my boss) had a crush on me that I perhaps, maybe, kind of took advantage of. Okay, I got my own room while the rest of the volunteers had to share. And I got to work where I wanted to and take time off when I wanted to. It was a sweet deal, and I felt justified because I had to put up with him constantly hitting on me, even though I made it clear I didn't want to sleep with him.

Some say bosses and employees shouldn't mix, end of story. The inherent power imbalance makes it inherently sexual harassment, which, last time I checked, is illegal. But others say that if two adults consent to a relationship, whatever their working relationship may be, it's none of our business — let them sort it out.

My own feelings lie somewhere in the middle. I mean, practically every woman has had some form of weird, charged relationship with some authority figure in her life. And even if he didn't act on it, I'm sure most guys have wanted to have a relationship with a female teacher or some other female authority at some point in their lives. Older, more experienced people in positions of authority are exciting when you're young, inexperienced, and without much power. There's no denying it.

Sometimes these relationships are educational. I have a friend whose affair with her college professor has proven to be one of the most meaningful of her life. In their brief time together, he taught her about love and made her feel special in a way other boys haven't.

Sometimes, these relationships even last. I know another friend who worked in a restaurant and started dating her boss. They eventually married and now she manages the restaurant.

It's when it doesn't work out, when the bubble bursts, that it gets ugly. Sure, the relationship seemed like a good idea at the time — in fact, it probably made you feel quite in control. "Woo-hoo! I'm sleeping with

the boss; I can do no wrong; I can make him do whatever I want." Until he decides it's over. Or his wife finds out. (Not that that always ends it. I know one prof who slept with a student and ended up leaving his wife to be with her. Last I heard, they were still together.) Suddenly, you realize how powerless you are, how you need to keep being nice to this person to keep your job or pass a course, with little means of retaliation.

Still, ruling out dating in the workplace entirely, as is the case in some companies, strikes me as mildly insulting. It's like saying, "You people are too stupid to figure out the complexities of having a relationship with someone you work with or for, so we won't even let you try."

To me, the issue is simple: it all depends where your intentions lie. As the boss or teacher, are you doing it because you can? Because you wield the power to get away with it? Because if it doesn't work out or if your employee doesn't respond to your interest, you can fire them or make their lives miserable? Or do you genuinely like the person and are prepared to deal with the complications, problems, or fallout that may arise from dating an employee?

Ever since men and women ... okay, let's not be heterosexist — ever since people have had to work together, the potential for romance and the potential for the abuse of power have coexisted.

Sexual harassment laws have done much to educate and eliminate the blatant abuse of power. The problem, however, is that harassment laws tend to be interpreted in ridiculous ways, making it easy to

discredit them. For instance, when harassment laws are used to stop a man from putting a picture of his wife in a bikini on his desk (which apparently happened somewhere in the U.S.), it provides fuel for those looking for any reason to undermine this legitimate protection. "Po-

litical correctness is out of control," they cry.

But as far as I'm concerned, as long as men and women are too daft to recognize behaviour that makes another person uncomfortable, and as long as there are bosses, teachers, and other authority figures that

abuse their power, we need them.

On the other hand, I've got one law that would eliminate all of the confusion if we all stuck to it: date whoever the heck you want — just be prepared to respect them in the morning and beyond ... and even more so if things go belly up.

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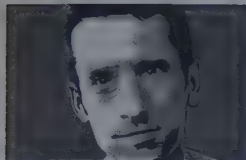
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**THERE'S A HAPPY MEDIUM
TO BE FOUND BETWEEN THIS
HIGH-LIBIDO GUY AND HIS
LOW-LIBIDO GIRL**

My boyfriend and I are in our mid-20s, love each other, and have been living together for two years. We have good sex once a week. I have a happy libido, and I always have. But my sweet boyfriend needs more than once a week. Every once in a while, he brings up the fact that he'd like to have more sex. This conversation always goes the same way: He tells me, I start crying, he feels terrible for making me cry, we both wind up feeling like shit.

I'm pretty sure that the solution is for me to jump my sexy boyfriend more often. But I don't

know how. I know I have an inner vixen buried somewhere inside me. I would appreciate any suggestions you have.

Wanna Want More

If you've been to the doc and ruled out a hormonal imbalance, WWM, and made sure that whatever birth-control method you're using isn't decimating your libido, your best bet is to accept that this is just the way you work for now — you may surprise yourself when you hit your sexual peak in a few years — and find some middle ground.

Let's say your boyfriend wants it four times a week and you can only "get into it" once a week. I'm not going to tell you that it's as simple as splitting the difference — have sex twice a week! everybody loses! — because that advice, which is pretty standard for couples in your situation, is fucking useless. Inevitably, sex falls back to the frequency preferred by the person with the lower libido — just the boyfriend loses! — but having been promised more sex, the higher-libido partner's sense of resentment spikes, there are more tearful talks, and the relationship in-

variably ends.

Here's what you should do instead: You commit to great sex at least once a week. He deals. But you also commit to making sure your boyfriend is well and thoroughly milked — with your cheerful assistance — at least three additional times a week. You commit to being his full-blown sex partner once a week and his life-size, ambulatory masturbatory aide at least three times a week.

How would that work? Well, let's say you're not up for sex on Wednesday because you had sex last Sunday. But he's horny. So you plop your twat down on his face and let him eat you out while he beats off. It'll take 10 minutes. Then let's say he's horny again on Friday, but you're just not feeling it. So you treat him to a handjob while you rub your tits in his face. Another 10 minutes. And let's say he wakes up horny on Saturday morning. So you sit on the edge of the bed, have him kneel between your open legs, and pull his face into your crotch while you tell him how thoroughly you're going to fuck the shit out of him tomorrow, on Sunday, when you're finally horny again.

As a special bonus, WWM, you may find that once the pressure is off — once you're not expected to have or want sex but just expected to help out your horny boyfriend — your libido occasionally kicks in and you're inspired to jump him. Or not. Either way, the pressure is off, you're having great sex at least once a week, and he sees you making a sincere effort to keep his balls drained and him happy. Everybody wins.

I am a single, young, professional gal who likes to party until the break of dawn. This weekend, I went out with a group. One of the guys, who I liked as a friend but was not attracted to, was at first cordial. But he became aggressive on the dance floor. He kept grabbing me by the hips and pulling me closer. He seemed to think my proper response was to turn around and start humping his leg.

Is there some unspoken understanding that I am unaware of that grinding on a guy's leg on the dance floor does not mean that a girl is interested in him? Is this just the way people dance now? If so, am I a prude for not wanting to rub my genitals on a guy I have no interest in? If not, then I need help with what to say if this happens again!

Grind It Someplace Else

One of two things was going on, GISE. For fear of seeming unfriendly, you sent signals that Dancer Boy innocently mistook for mild interest, and he attempted to get things started, as the kids used to say, on the dance floor; or, Dancer Boy knew you weren't interested but sensed that you, like many young women, were socialized to be polite and deferential to men and knowingly manipulated you into a situation that made you feel uncomfortable.

The next time someone touches you on the dance floor in a way that makes you uncomfortable, GISE, here's what you do: no smiles, no dancing away, no polite attempts to deflect his attention. Stop dancing, make eye contact, shake your head

slowly back and forth, and clearly mouth the word "NO." Then go back to dancing in whatever manner and in whatever space and with whatever partner you choose. And if the same guy attempts to pull you onto his ass after you've given him the stop-stand-stare "NO," GISE, do all women everywhere a favor and kick him in the nuts.

I am a 27-year-old hetero female. My new boyfriend is 24 and kinky. Before I met him, I had never been bound or spanked or had any kind of sex that was not "vanilla." I have enjoyed everything we have done and I trust him. Now he wants anal sex. He has what I think is an average dick — based on the three others I've seen — but I'm afraid that it will be painful. Am I a big baby?

Another Needing Anal Lessons

I order you to start having anal sex with your boyfriend immediately, ANAL. Tons of anal — but without letting your boyfriend's cock come anywhere near your ass, 'kay?

In other words: yes to anal, no to dick. Think tongues, lubed-up fingers, very small toys, and smooth, clean vibrators used non-insertively (which is fancy sex-advice talk for "lay the vibrator on your asshole, don't shove it the fuck in"), not dick. If you find that you enjoy other kinds of anal sex — and you will — your boyfriend's dick may start to look like a shiny new toy or an enticing upgrade option, and not the intimidating asshammer that it appears to be now.

But for this to work, your boyfriend has to swear on a stack of Jack Morin's *Anal Pleasure & Health* that he will pleasure your ass and get you off without attempting to rush you or pressure you into dick-in-ass butt fucking until you decide you're ready.

Per your column last week: When a man puts his balls in someone's ass, it's referred to as "putting the dog in the bathtub," because it's so hard to accomplish. Kevin

It might amuse me, Kevin, if so many readers weren't absolutely furious about the advice I gave the woman who freaked out about her partner's request to stuff his balls in her. You can read their outraged letters — and my feeble attempts to respond — at www.thestranger.com/savage/insertballshere.

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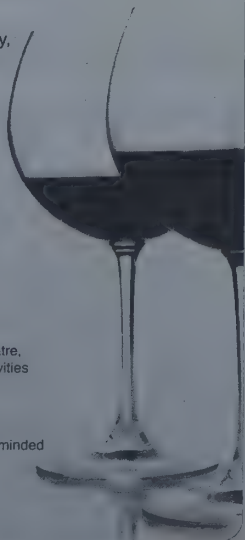
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ASTROLOGY • SEPTEMBER 25 TO OCTOBER 1 • BY THE KID

CRUISIN' THE COSMOS

PISCES

(FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20)

It can make life easy, swimmin' along with the flow, but as all salmon know, sometimes you need to swim against it to get where you gotta go. This is one of those weeks. Don't be afraid to go against the grain, 'cause you'll trade the short-term pain for long-term gain!

ARIES

(MARCH 21 - APRIL 19)

All work and no play may make you dull and bore you outta your skull, but, right now, your agenda is full. All you want is to have some fun, but don't jump the gun, 'cause you'll create more work for yourself if what you have isn't done. Soon you'll be able to sit back 'n' relax, but this week, you need to perform to the max!

Taurus

(APRIL 20 - MAY 20)

Don't get depressed, 'cause your life appears messed. It's just that earth

sings find it hard to see happiness beyond fiscal security. Sure, you may be painfully aware of impulses you can't afford, but pain's helpful when addressed and gets worse when ignored. Right now, work's the best way to deal with the discomfort you feel!

GEMINI

(MAY 21 - JUNE 20)

Although the eve of the new moon is the month's darkest night, this week, you'll see your choices clearly, as if bathed in bright light. Of course, seein' and bein' are two different things, and you have to deal with the dilemma this clarity brings. That's the hard part. Which do you feed — your stomach or heart?

CANCER

(JUNE 21 - JULY 22)

If you were a cartoon character, you'd open your wallet right now and a couple of moths would flutter out. That'd be nice 'cause at least you'd have somethin' in there besides thin

air, but, as it stands, you're human and it ain't all that funny. That's why, this week, it's all about workin' for the money!

LEO

(JULY 23 - AUGUST 22)

You ain't gonna be much more than a flash in the pan if you think your success makes you Da WoMan. If you try to play it like it's a game of king of the hill, you'll start to treat everyone you meet like it's kill or be killed. Try to keep an open mind, and you'll see how much support you'll actually find!

VIRGO

(AUGUST 23 - SEPTEMBER 22)

Here's a warnin' about the havoc it'll wreak when the new moon brings major changes this week. Not that it'll be bad luck or somethin' you have to fear or to fight, but it'll be so overwhelming you'll be stuck like a deer in headlights. Give it a bit to set in, but before long, you'd better get runnin' along!

LIBRA

(SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 22)

Things don't always turn out the way you planned, so don't be too shy to ask for a hand. A helpin' hand, that is. But let's make one thing perfectly clear — we ain't talkin' 'bout charity here. Ask and ye shall receive a break, but success is up to you to make!

SCORPIO

(OCTOBER 23 - NOVEMBER 21)

You can say it's all good and knock-on-wood, but that don't mean you can avoid doin' what you know you should. Not 'cause others' opinions are feared, but so you can comfortably look in the mirror. This week, do what you know to be honest and true, and don't worry 'bout what folks think about you!

SAGITTARIUS

(NOVEMBER 22 - DECEMBER 21)

It ain't hard to be honest when things are goin' good, but when times are tough, it's hard to do what you should.

The temptation to be shady and/or shifty is huge, but so are the chances you'll get used as a stooge. This week, if you come correct, things'll turn out better than you expect!

CAPRICORN

(DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 19)

There ain't nothin' wrong with havin' a dream, but watch you don't get suckered by a get-rich-quick scheme. If anyone should know that wealth without work is too good to be true, it oughtta be an earth sign like you. This week, makin' a buck is all about work — not about luck!

AQUARIUS

(JANUARY 20 - FEBRUARY 18)

It's a good thing you're a people person, or this week you'd be steadily cursin'. Don't plan on gettin' too much time alone 'cause your doorbell'll be ringin' and so'll your phone. Go ahead and take any opportunity given, but don't let it interfere with the way you wanna be livin'!

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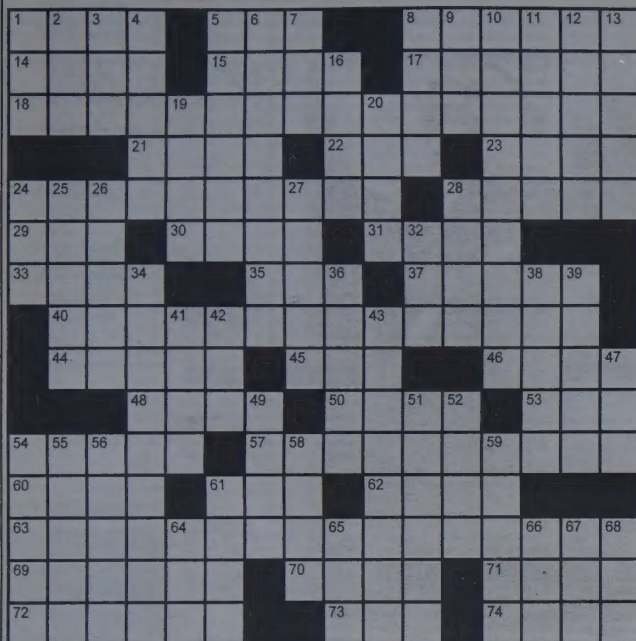
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PASSE STAR FIRST
SOLUTION TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLE

ON AN AXIS

FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER

JONESIN' CROSSWORD BY MATT JONES

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ACROSS

- 1 Messy entree
- 5 ...Lingus (Irish carrier)
- 8 Apres-ski drinks
- 14 Name of a lake and canal
- 15 Wheat-based Japanese noodles
- 17 Newspaper publisher William Randolph
- 18 Cincinnati home of the Musketeers
- 21 McDonald's magnate Ray
- 22 Gangster's gun
- 23 Potting need
- 24 Technique used by photocopiers
- 28 Tubular pasta
- 29 Smog watchers: abbr.
- 30 It'll be taken in January 2009
- 31 Mimic
- 33 Cones' mates, in the retina
- 35 Alley
- 37 Bikini, for one
- 40 Actor who played George Mason on "24"
- 44 California town with an accidentally palindromic bakery
- 45 Squeeze (out)
- 46 Disneyland memento
- 48 Prefix meaning "within"
- 50 Took way too much
- 53 Spinach or onion, e.g.
- 54 Attractive
- 57 Marvel Comics series, as of February 2008
- 60 Clapton or Cartman
- 61 Gnarls Barkley lead singer
- 62 Charlie Chaplin wife O'Neill
- 63 Official press group of the Chinese government
- 69 "Try not to cause..."
- 70 Like some pregnancies
- 71 Luke Skywalker's sister

DOWN

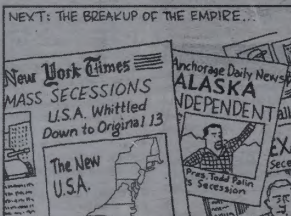
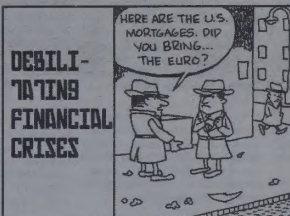
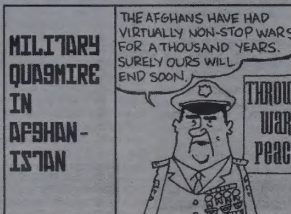
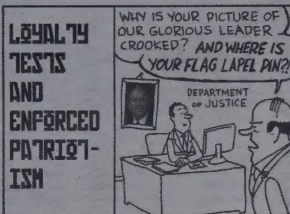
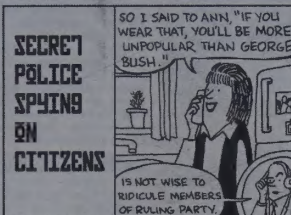
- 1 Oscar winner Harrison
- 2 NPR "Science Friday" host Flatow
- 3 1990s R&B group Bell
- 4 Official timekeeper of the Nagano Winter Olympics
- 5 Luminescent phenomenon
- 6 One with a teaching degree
- 7 Harry and Hermione's friend
- 8 Wyatt's piggyback brother, in "Weird Science"
- 9 "Love, Reign... Me" (the Who song)
- 10 Dish in its own dish
- 11 Constellation with a belt
- 12 Sean of "Lord of the Rings"
- 13 Arrange hair
- 16 Near
- 19 Therefore
- 20 ...Con Dios
- 24 Generation
- 25 Adhesive resin
- 26 Fly under the
- 27 Suffix after "xeno" or "germo"
- 28 Wentz of Fall Out Boy
- 32 Goller Se Ri
- 34 Star-bellied Seuss characters
- 36 Black tea variety
- 38 "You can... horse to water..."
- 39 Song snippet
- 41 Fashion design label headquartered in Manhattan
- 42 Grab a bite
- 43 Like Rudolph
- 47 Operative
- 49 Teamed beasts
- 51 Modern-day cash advances

- 72 Liam in the upcoming "Lincoln"
- 73 Super Bowl scores, for short
- 74 Spend some time in the tub
- 52 Former Communist leader
- 54 Steve Martin, by birth
- 55 Get up
- 56 Subsequently
- 58 Bump into
- 59 Scottish Highlanders
- 61 Columnist Herb who coined the word "beatnik"
- 64 Card game with four colors
- 65 Like fresh paint
- 66 Role for Keanu
- 67 Govt. group with a Director
- 68 Have a gabfest

TOMMY DANCING Bug

by Ruben Bolling

TODAY'S USA IS THE USSR OF THE 1980s



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Friends and family celebrate during the traditional Lebanese wedding of Nora and Steve Yaghi in Castledowns on Sept. 21. The ceremony takes place in the bride's home, where the groom and his family arrive to receive her.
PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

FIRST PERSON • EDMONTON STORIES • BY MEAGAN HALL | 622 words

{ E-Town Gets Its Acts Together }

YOU SAY "HELLO, EDMONTON?"
I SAY, "HELLO, OASIS!"

If you had told me 10 years ago that I would be seeing Oasis live in Edmonton, I would have called you a liar!

"Hello, Edmonton!!!!"

Ahh... the highly anticipated welcome E-Town concertgoers are greeted with time and time again. I will never forget the first time these two glorious words were said to me. I remember the day so clearly. It was a warm August night in 1996 and my parents had planned a family outing for all five of us to see one of the biggest country superstars in the world, Garth Brooks.

I distinctly remember being wowed by every minute of Garth's set. (Yes... I am on a first-name basis with Mr. Brooks.) I remember being so proud that I was from Edmonton as Garth

ran up and down the stage welcoming us to the show.

While my musical tastes have developed since then, the magic I experienced that night at the Northlands Coliseum (this show took place long before the days of Rexall Place) will never leave my heart. That was the day I fell in love with live music.

Unfortunately, not as many acts as I had hoped would welcome me or touch my heart in the same way Garth did. Having been born and raised in Edmonton, I have been forced to come to terms with the fact that we just don't get as many live shows as the bigger cities do. When world tours get announced, Canada's portion of the world often only

includes Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal – if they're lucky.

When I was in high school this was a constant gripe of mine. I would ask, "Why doesn't so-and-so come to Edmonton?"

I would complain, "Don't they realize that Canada is bigger than Toronto?"

But I never gave up hope.

This was a fact that I hated to admit, but it looked like a constant string of concerts just wasn't in the stars for Edmonton concertgoers. It seemed as though a solid concert schedule would only happen once a year in Edmonton, during concert season (which other people apparently refer to as summer).

Needless to say, I have always been grateful for concert season as it's one of the few times a year I get to relive the joy I tasted back in August 1996. The acts that come through during the other 10 months are usually Canadians used to touring the great white winters (which, let's face it, usually last about 10 months).

Now don't get me wrong: we have got lots of great talent here in Canada. But you can only see The Tea Party, Sloan, and Moist so many times before they wear out their wel-

comes.

I grew up feeling that it was virtually impossible to see any band with a hint of global success in my hometown. But, as luck would have it, times are a-changin'. In one week I had not one, not two, but four genuinely exciting concerts in seven days! I even missed out on a couple of shows because I had been double-booked! (I was forced to choose between Bloc Party and Sleepycar on Tuesday, and Against Me! and Creature on Friday... sad times.)

Slowly but surely, more and more acts have been passing through Edmonton – not only during concert season, but all year long. Since January, Rascal Flatts, MIA, Elton John, The Hives, Iron Maiden, Rush, Kanye West, and Oasis have all graced our various venues. I heard that in 2007 Rexall Place was the fifth-busiest major concert venue in North America, and the 12th-busiest internationally.

Only time will tell if this trend continues, but I am going to enjoy the ride as long as it lasts and I hope you'll be joining me. After all, maybe what countless bands have told me is true: maybe Edmonton is so much better than Calgary.



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